A BRAND NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Mediascene

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

THEY WERE THE SUPER-ACES - THEY FLEW ABOVE THE BURNING BATTLEFIELDS OF WORLD WAR 1 - THEY STALKED THE KILLER SKIES

THE AIR WAR IN FILMS, PULPS AND COMICS
WITH A SPECIAL CENTERSPREAD POSTER

A FANTASTIC BURROUGHS PORTFOLIO BY FRANK FRAZETTA

SCIENCE FICTION ON FILM - A REPORT ON LOGAN'S RUN

JERRY SIEGEL TALKS ABOUT THE CASE AGAINST SUPERMAN

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january—february
publisher and editor
STERANKO
associate editor
KEN GRUSSMAN
special features editor
ERIC VAN LUSTBADER
correspondents
BOB COSSMOVE
BOB GLUT
MARTY GREEN
BOB LANGER
CARL MACEK
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MEDIASCENE

I've made it a practice (or maybe a ritual) since I began the SUPERGRAPHICS operation back in 1968 to take a moment at the close of each year to reflect on the previous twelve months output—and what it's meant both to the business and to me personally.

When I decided to focus my creative energies on the publishing field, I realized my normal output of art and writing would be reduced to a fraction of its potential. The past year is a perfect example. Though my actual artistic output is perhaps lower this year than ever before, it has been the busiest yet—and, more importantly, brought me closer to my eventual goal, the realization of a number of ideas and concepts which I feel demand fulfillment.

Nonetheless, I've produced an awful lot of art for MEDIASCENE (in addition to designing every page, creating lettering and titles, and writing a host of features and articles), completed almost a dozen paperback cover paintings, worked on an assortment of black and white illustrations for other publishers, and established The Shadow Fiction Society and The Brotherhood of Steranko. As for personal appearances, I've exhibited my work at two or six conventions during the year—all this, of course, besides handling the administrative side of the business.

MEDIASCENE continues to be my premier project—and the one that takes the most time, effort and energy. Take this issue, for instance, whose pace is set by a thundering action cover anticipating a variety of excitement that is to come in the pages which follow.

Logan's Run, a film which MGM describes as having the most expensive budget since their How The West Was Won, heads off this issue's line-up. Science fiction has almost never been taken seriously by Hollywood, a precedent that is apparently being upset in the wake of films like 2001 and Clockwork Orange. Run promises to be an achievement on the same level. George Clayton Johnson, who co-authored the novel with William Nolan, gives our pictorial preview a personal counterpoint by revealing how it all came about.

The Logan's Run report (MEDIASCENE is the first national magazine to deliver a comprehensive report on the film) was written by Carl Macek, an important new contributor to this publication. He has served as [illegible] Arcthive at Cal State U and is currently film consultant to the California Council for Economic Education. He was a writer and contributing editor for Seaboard Periodicals and is currently free-lancing for a number of West Coast magazines. You'll find his initial contribution to MEDIASCENE to be energetic, informative and, most of all, entertaining.

The core of this issue's features deals with a subject which has long been a personal favorite, the aerial conflict of WWI. Out of that very special interest grew the idea which has materialized in these pages—the romance of the air war in films, pulps and in the comics.

I originally contacted Martin Greim (artist, writer and publisher of Comic Crusader) to begin developing the article. He and Bob Cosgrove researched film and comic material, and compiled a lengthy piece which I expanded by adding the evolution of the air war, its exploitation by the pulps, and the final film and comic book touches. You'll find the results of our efforts beginning just beyond The Killer Skies centerspread which was done especially for this issue.

Readers should find this comprehensive but fast-moving feature a new approach for MEDIASCENE, which generally accomodates a much shorter, more compact format. We've assembled a top-flight selection of graphics to illustrate the aerial entertainments herein. A special thanks to pulp collector Emile Toth for gathering much of the material we used to fill the The Killer Skies.

Section two of MEDIASCENE explodes with a fabulous folio by Frank Frazetta to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the man who created Tarzan, Edgar Rice Burroughs. The coming year will be an important one for ERB followers, with a number of projects in the developing stage. We'll be on hand for all of them—and add a few of our own to the celebration.

It looks like the 1978 spotlight will be shared by a host of heroes from Uncle Sam on down. It appears that The Man of Steel has already gotten more than his share of media publicity (though we suspect his public relations man is hoping it'll all turn out to be another DC dream sequence). We're returning, of course, to Siegel and Shuster's Case Against Superman which is reported here from its very beginnings to the final settlement. We're tickled red, white and blue.

The usual film, comic and magazine news fills out the issue, one that is packed with the type of art and articles our readers have come to expect from MEDIASCENE. Our next few issues, already in the planning stages, should be even more exciting.

An intimate special [illegible] How I Paint The Shadow is scheduled, and will feature a series of step-by-step photos of the art along with a wealth of previously unpublished sketches of the man in black!

Who were the prototypes for the great costumed crimefighters of American fiction? Who was The Bat, The Man With the Rubber Face, The Shadow before The Shadow, Spring-heeled Jack, The Black Bat and the bizarre Mr. Death? You'll find out in part two of Behind The Mask next issue.

Do you know the title of the rarest pulp magazine in existence? We do—and we plan to run not one but 50 of the world's rarest pulps along with their current prices and their claim to fame. This fascinating first-time-ever feature will reproduce their full cover art and a rundown of their contents. A combination you won't want to miss. Image of by the preview below.

H.P. Lovecraft was the most prolific and popular writer of fantasy and horror, with Weird Tales his platform. Both were honored this past Halloween at a special gathering by Weird Tales writers and their followers. MEDIASCENE was on hand to cover the event and will present a photo-filled report (second best to being there) next month.

Still more surprises will be on tap in the coming months as we prepare a SPECIAL ANIMATION ISSUE and another SWORD AND SORCERY SPECTACULAR, brimming with action art and articles.

Till then, take care ●
STERANKO

SUBSCRIBERS—PLEASE NOTE: THIS DOUBLE ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO!

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES

No. 1 — Power packed premiere issue on DOC SAVAGE, illustrated versions of Doc by Mike Ploog, Gene Colan, Stan Aschmeier, Marie Severin and Sherazin. Big Doc Savage article spotlights the Man of Bronze. News and reviews, topped off by pulp and comic reproductions. Full-page Shadow presentation pieces by Sherazin.

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the story behind Beck's reunion with the Big Red Cheese, illustrated with photos of artists and writers from the 40's and the 70's. Beck's Sky Man Marvel opposite, along with articles on the Spider pulps. Kresge underground comix and an offbeat and surprising centerspread by Sherazin.

No. 3 — Haunting HORROR COMICS issue, from EC to the Marvel black and whites to the underground, all discussed and dissected in a definitive article. Illustrated with dozens of vintage horror comic covers. "Visage," the mystique, turquoise graphic story by Sherazin, appears in the centerspread. Pictorial features on Horror Pulps.

No. 4 — DRUGS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The controversial 8-page anti-drug story "The Black," by Sherazin highlights this issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus comix news, articles, features, and behind-the-scenes editorial by Sherazin.

No. 5 — Special SWORDS AND SORCERY issue. Giant double issue featuring news, articles and art. Never before published illustrations by Morgan, Bo Is Fuentes Smith, Kirbert, Kirby, Sherazin and others. Definitive articles on Conan and Howard, the Evolution of S&S and Barbarians in the Comics, and more on the heroic fantasy field.

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of action-packed facts and graphics. An article on Burroughs all the Pulps is featured along with giant centerspread poster-map of Barsoom. John Carter's long and foregone career is recapped with rare pulp illustrations. Comic scene, paperback reviews, films, records and media fill out the package.

No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Public Enemy to Magnum Force, featuring Sherazin cover and centerspread paintings. Interview with Exploitation author Don Pendleton, writing for crime thrillers by Stan Collins and Clint Spotswood profile. Expanded news of Sci-fi and comics to go with title change to Mediascene.

No. 8 — Plentiful Pin-UP issue, packed with a special graphic history of pin-up art from comics to calendars in general. A Sherazin tribute to Marilyn Monroe graces the centerspread, along with pin-ups from the past. Larger comics, Sci-fi and media news are heavily illustrated with exciting graphics in a new, redesigned format.

No. 9 — Amazing All-HERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the filming of Doc Savage, interview with Zardoz director John Boorman, full-page map of Tarzan's Africa, Sherazin centerspread of his barbarian hero, Tales, Comic, Film, TV and paperback news about Zarzoz, Flash Gordon, others fill out this heroic issue.

No. 10 — SCIENCE FICTION Spectacular illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Hinga, Sherazin, more. Giant double-issue packed with art and graphics, fantastic 6-Million Dollar Man centerspread in color. All SF comics revisited, Planet of the Ages, SF on TV, The Great SF Illustrators, Incredible Pulps, comics, films. A galactic blockbuster!

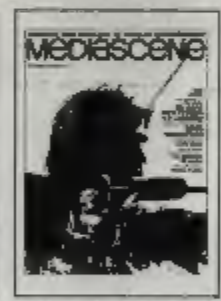
No. 11 Bold ADVENTURE issue features Hollywood's disaster films, The Return of The Pulp Heroes (Shadow, Savage, Spider), Pictorial Profile on Charles Bronson, Pleasant Pulps, Behind the Scenes at the Marvel Companies. New, large 25-page format, expanded cover sections, more vibrant color with super-sized Sword and Sorcery centerspread.

No. 12 — Big FILM issue. Special Preview of Godfather II, Pages Heavy in Gold, others; Pictorial of James Bond in Man With the Golden Gun; The Mistress of Mystery, Agatha Christie and her Film Murder On The Orient Express; rare movie bio of Lenny Bruce; The Complete in Film and fiction; colorful centerspread poster; art covers; film.

No. 13 — AN ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of The Great Waldo Pepper, Phantom of the Paradise, and The Legend of Billy Jack. Special feature on The Return of Sherlock Holmes with James centerspread poster in color. Plus focus on fun new flicks, plus comic news, paperbacks, more media news. SF, fantasy, adventure!

No. 14 — Powerful All-PULP issue. Nothing the most fantastic heroes in fiction. The Secrets Behind The Shadow written by his creator, Walter Gibson. Spectacular color-filled centerspread introducing the Doc Savage and Shadow fan clubs, in-depth feature on the Origins of Pulp Heroes. Preview of Tomorrow, Edgar Sanction, more.

No. 15—Double-sized COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode's startling self-portrait in words and pictures, his last created work, a penetrating look at Barry Smith, illustrated with a giant color centerspread, special feature on Jack Kirby's return to Marvel with exclusive 8-centerspread pin-up of Cap America; The Art of Nigel Dennis with a full-page Terrace.



No. 16—Special 6811575 issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Richard Corbet graphics novels. Master of the Macabre, Basil Wrightson, reveals his influences and motivations in a candid interview; Feral Tribute to Vaughn Bode with an unpublished portrait by Vincent Bodig; photo homage on Royal Flash; extended coverage on comics, musique.

To those of you who have enquired about the progress of our forthcoming publication, **THE 80s ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPER HEROES**, the books are still in production. All orders which have been received by us to date have been processed for mailing when the Encyclopedia are finally completed. We realize that the books are long overdue, but history takes time to create. We guarantee you'll find them well worth the wait—and that their quality will excel our other publications in style, design, content, format and perfection. Upon publication, the price of **The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes** will probably be raised to meet rising production costs.

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(Signed) James Steranko

[redacted] interview conducted with C. C. Johnson at the American Comic Book Co. in Studio City, Ca.]

Imagine a world existing in the rubble of a devastating nuclear war, a world that has forced its population to seek shelter beneath the protective cover of a hermetically sealed dome; a world in which no one is permitted to live past the age of thirty; a world that has debased humanity to the point that executions are experienced primarily through the use of sophisticated drugs and technologies.

If you can imagine all that then MGM's multi-million dollar production of William F. Nolan's and George Clayton Johnson's novel **LOGAN'S RUN** should come as no great surprise.

What should surprise anyone who has kept up with the current

LOGAN'S RUN

[redacted]-film ritual is the fact that **LOGAN'S RUN** is finally being made into a movie. Ever since the book's initial release in 1967, the tantalizing phrase "soon to be a major motion picture" has been tacked onto its book jacket and blurbed about in various motion picture trade papers. All of course without any apparent results. Therefore it might prove enlightening to look into the actual history of **LOGAN'S RUN**'s spasmodic journey to the Widescreen from its beginning. And who better to chronicle this saga than one of the book's original authors:

*"If [**LOGAN'S RUN**] WAS A NATURAL-BORN BOOK INTO MOVIE BECAUSE, CYNICALLY, THAT IS WHAT WE HAD WRITTEN — A MOVIE INTO A BOOK. William F. Nolan and I, because we were based in Southern California and were heavily into movies, and because I had a filmcredit [**OCEAN'S 11**], were able to take it to various agents. We initially optioned the book to Stanley Cantor for a laborious dream deal. Cantor took out ads in the trade papers to give **LOGAN'S RUN** a sense of place—establishing it as something soon to be a movie. His intended deal with Columbia did not come off before his 18 month option ran out, which freed us once again to offer **LOGAN'S***

by CARL MACEK

...ROM ... [illegible] ... a new hinterplace we finally came up with several interested parties, one of which was MGM. It was now merely a problem of quibbling about the price. MGM finally bought the property outright. They then hired George Pal to produce it. He in turn hired Richard Matheson to write the screenplay. Ultimately MGM found the project unsatisfactory, at which time they terminated their deal with George Pal and the whole thing went on a shelf. After a few years, George Pal and I decided to try and revive the project. I sent a revised screenplay to Daniel Melnick, but by that time MGM had already re-assigned the project to Saul David. At last count LOGAN'S RUN had cost MGM seven million dollars and Saul David told Nolan that they expected to spend millions to publicize it. I have heard from various people at MGM that nothing of this size has been done, in terms of epic, since HOW THE WEST WAS WON."

That, at least, gives the how of LOGAN'S RUN—the what is another story altogether. Coming from the studio that brought the world such science fiction classics as FORBIDDEN PLANET (1956) and 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968), LOGAN'S RUN will undoubtably benefit from an impressive production design. But the design is not the only thing impressive about the film. Take the cast for example. Michael York stars as Logan, a Sandman—an elite police officer trained to hunt down and destroy the dissidents that try to escape Lastday and live beyond the age of 30. Jenny Agutter (of WALKABOUT and THE RAILWAY CHILDREN fame) plays Jessica, a rational soul in a world gone mad, who accompanies Logan as he becomes a "Runner," himself trying to circumvent the rigid laws forbidding longevity. Peter Ustinov creates another remarkable performance as the last man alive in the desolated remains of Washington D.C. whose immediate environment is shared by a virtual army of cats. And the magnificent voice of Roscoe Lee Browne is the only recognizable feature of this famous black actor as he dons a bizarre corrugated costume to portray The Box—guardian of the world's food supplies stored away in the frozen wastes of the outer world.

Michael Anderson, fresh from directing DOC SAVAGE and CONDUCT UNBECOMING, was given the task of putting together the diverse elements of Saul David's undeniably opulent production of LOGAN'S RUN. The screenplay was written by David Zelag Goodman, and contains much of the original intent found in Johnson and Nolen's futuristic novel. Although the book does [illegible] ... warmed-over, it does manage to suspend our disbelief long enough to make a provocative observation:

"Death by government decree is a cosmic idea...The frightening part is not so much that you've got to die but that you must die by some government order. It doesn't matter if you are 50 or 80 or 100—if when you got to be 85 you HAD to turn yourself in—it would be just as horrifying a concept".

It was this concept that stuck with LOGAN'S RUN throughout the many apparent false starts as well as being the focal point of MGM's new film.

Using the most advanced architectural structures in America as a backdrop, LOGAN'S RUN proceeds to create a world that cries of conformity and the destruction that inevitably follows in its wake. But no matter how futuristic and avant-garde

A PICTORIAL PREVIEW WITH REFLECTIONS BY GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON

the original book was, the movie retains all the conventions and structural devices of a basic thriller.

"...the fantasy watering down process...The fantasy is strained. In an effort to get our book past home plate, we had to make it readable and believable; we had to be very artful with language and we had to stretch and make it surreal—make the reader go along with our surrealism. In the movie they have trimmed about 40% of our original story while at the same time solving some of the unexplainable situations we did not justify in our original story...They have it all worked out. Conceptually it is really very strong."

And yet for all its conventionality, LOGAN'S RUN does manage to function as an avant-garde piece of filmmaking. The experimental quality of the picture comes from the decision to utilize holographic sequences as an integral part of the plot, making Saul David's film the first major Hollywood production to use the laser generated light images.

When the news of MGM's decision to use holography in LOGAN'S RUN was first announced, speculation was wild with visions of revolutionary advances to the art of the cinema. THE INITIAL NEWS OF THE HOLGRAMS MIGHT HAVE PROMISED ALL THIS AND MORE [illegible]

[illegible] ... Working at the Multiples Laboratories in San Francisco, pre-production holograms were filmed of Michael York. A number of similar sequences were filmed using the laser beam technique. Back in Culver City, the ancestral home of MGM, these holographic movies were projected into the sequence in which York is interrogated by the police and finds himself surrounded by his own materialized ID. The sequence is photographed like any other segment of the film. The only difference comes in the fact that the set is populated by ectoplasmic light images which have shapes and form, can move independently, talk and appear as a virtual rainbow of color.

According to Don Morgan, head publicist for the film, the sequence was difficult to photograph saying that it had to be shot in very low light in order to make the holograms visible. Too much illumination would flood the set with excess light and totally obscure the images. The effect will not be as spectacular as those speculated before. Rather, the viewer will see an ordinary two-dimensional image unembellished by the holograms, which appear like any other object in the scene.

Chris Outwater, one of America's leading scientists in the field of holography was hired by David to design other light and image techniques which would exploit the laser-light properties so they could be used as part of the futuristic decor. All in all, a relatively stunning concept.

"New ideas don't floor me. I don't say 'Wow'; I can not. Somehow nothing is too far out. No, it's perfectly right in there."

The holograms may not be a revolutionary step in the constant search for new forms of entertainment, but it does suggest some visionary thinking on the part of many Hollywood executives. Science fiction films are finally coming of age. What with attempts like SLAUGHTER-HOUSE FIVE, ZARDOZ, A BOY AND HIS DOG and now LOGAN'S RUN, the filmmaking community has finally realized the importance of science fiction. If the 70's do nothing else, it will at least have established the legitimacy of speculative fiction as an accepted form of adult entertainment. Buck Rogers has finally made it through puberty.

"Science fiction movies have never been able to keep pace with science fiction writing. They've always been sort of an offshoot that we've been embarrassed about. Until recently, except for a few hearty souls like Forrest J. Ackerman, movies were something that science fiction fans, like I am, didn't much care for.

[illegible] ... LOGAN'S RUN ... concerned and the studio ... planning for Spring 1976 release. How the public will respond to the newest visions of the future, thanks to creative talents of Saul David and his crew remains to be seen. George Clayton Johnson, for one, feels that in a few years LOGAN'S RUN will be mentioned in the same breath with such films as 2001 and PLANET OF THE APES. His reasoning is sure and direct. He hopes that this film will give him the opportunity to finally explore the worlds created by his peers.

"I am a specialist in other worlds"

His project is called "The Guilts of Space." It is a visionary project and, as Johnson describes it, should prove to be both an adequate conclusion and an interesting preview to the possibilities of things to come:

"...I know it will take two or three years, and I know it will involve twenty or thirty of the most explosive and volatile personalities in the whole wide world but I know that when it is done it will make television history...there will be a library of let's say, 24 of them, and in that 24 you will have a leap, skip and a jump through all of classic science fiction—names like Ray Bradbury, A.E. Van Vogt, Theodore Sturgeon, Charles Beaumont, Robert Heinlein—with a frame built around it which I call 'The Guilts of Space'...at first it might seem almost unfathomable but if you listen real hard it goes like this:

The Guilts of space contain a billion lies
Of galaxies engulfing galaxies in funeral pires
Constellations flash and burn the holy night
Fill all the cosmos with blazing balls of light
Yet in the hearts of certain stars, they say,
The very fabric gives away
And light itself is frozen as it streams and
Blackness burns the night instead of sunlight beams.
And in this pit of non-existance is a doorway into different dreams
In ordinary dreams dragons fly with scales like jewels under an orange sky
In ordinary dreams in the worm's eye the snail is a slimy mountain avalanching by
In ordinary dreams dark thoughts glide through the spider's brain
As weaving magic nets he spins his day anticipating pain
In ordinary dreams life throbs in grains of seed
Indeed life knows a raging need to die, the first to breed and breed and breed
But in the hearts of certain stars it seems there is a doorway into different dreams
A doorway into cosmic [illegible]
[illegible] ●

Jack Katz is a renegade underground comic artist who began his profession during the Golden Age and had an active career for 30 years before abandoning it to work in the underground market in the 70's. For the past few years, he has been developing the *ultimate epic fantasy*—a 24-part super saga, two books of which are published each year. In envisioning **THE FIRST KINGDOM**, Katz has created a sweeping new mythos in the tradition of **J.R.R.Tolkein, Robert E. Howard** and **H.P.Lovecraft**. He begins the epic with world-wide destruction, and carefully chronicles the history which follows as civilizations rise from the shattered earth to challenge monsters, mutants and even the Gods themselves. *THE FIRST KINGDOM* is populated with a legion of fascinating and fantastic characters whose destinies cross and recross throughout the stories—stories which break completely from any form of previously established comic format. **THE FIRST KINGDOM** is the most ambitious and experimental graphic series now in publication. The opening chapters are available now in three 36-page volumes at $1.00 plus .25 postage.

BOOK ONE lays the groundwork for the series as prehistoric savagry follows nuclear disaster. Gods, demons and mutants rise to plague the hero, Darkenmoor, who dares trespass on their domain to gain the love of a Goddess.

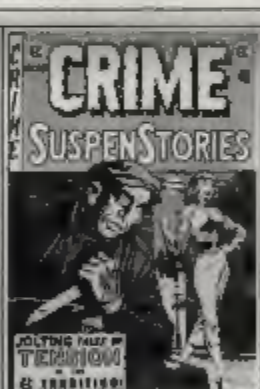
In **BOOK TWO**, the Creator of The Gods appears as Darkenmoor continues his battle against treacherous mortals and vengeful deities. The origins of the main characters are revealed throughout a series of deadly conflicts.

With **BOOK THREE**, Darkenmoor fulfills his destiny by building the first civilized city-state, Moorengan. The Goddess Selowan intervenes and inadvertantly opens the doorway for future treachery by both men and Gods.

SHOCK 12 features powerful dramatic tales with electrifying endings like "The Monkey." Wood, Crandall, Orlando, Kamen.

HAUNT OF FEAR 12, the last word in horror, with story and cover art by Ghastly Graham Ingels. Includes Jack Davis, Orlando, Johnny Craig.

WEIRD FANTASY 13 with two superb sci-fi stories by Wally Wood. Cover and bio on Al Feldstein, with interior art by Joe Orlando and Jack Kamen.



CRIME SUSPENSTORIES 25 reprints high-tension dramas with shock endings. Crandall, George Evans, Bernie Krigstein, Kamen.

VAULT OF HORROR 26 spotlights four more fear tales including Jack Davis' nightmarish "Graft is Corrupt." Ingels, Craig, Ed Cheik.

SHOCK 6 showcases Wood's sensative drama of Southern bigotry and intolerance, "Under Cover," others by Ingels, Orlando, Kamen.

TWO-FISTED TALES 34 dramatizes knights in armor by Wood, a Davis western, an Evans air-war story, Severin [illegible]!

HAUNT OF FEAR 23, an EC classic with an Ingels lead-off thriller, Jack Kamen grue fairy tale, Evan's vampire twister, Davis' blockbuster!

EC

FOR ME, SEE!

If **EC COMICS** are for you too, then here's a deal you can't afford to refuse! The eight titles offered here represent the cream of the EC crop and are authorized full-color reproductions, exactly like the originals, right down to the last detail (they even include the letter pages). The original comics are bringing prices as high as $20, $30 and $40 or more—and collectors are paying those prices to have the HIGHEST QUALITY ART WORK AND SCRIPTING that has ever gone into comic book production. Wally Wood, Al Williamson, Graham Ingels, John Severin, Jack Davis, Frank Frazetta, Harvey Kurtzman, Reed Crandall, Johnny Craig and Joe Orlando were all part of the EC era, and these high quality comics represent their greatest work. These comics usually sell for $1.25 to $1.50—*BUT ARE AVAILABLE NOW AT A SPECIAL DISCOUNT PRICE.* Single issues are priced .25 below regular retail cost. BUY ALL 8 and get an even GREATER SAVING—A $10 VALUE FOR $7.50!! Several of these comics are very low in stock and will not be reprinted after they are sold out. Take advantage of this SPECIAL DISCOUNT PRICED OFFER now—you'll be glad you did! Use order form on page 35.

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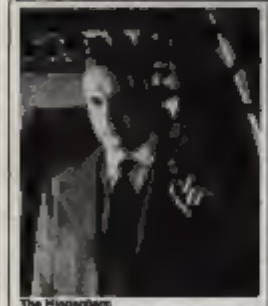
JOHNNY COMET

COMING ATTRACTIONS


The Hindenburg

The Hindenburg

Lionsmania

Lionsmania

Lucky Lady

Monkey, monkey. Who's got the monkey?

King Kong is back in the Big Apple, and as if New York didn't have enough troubles, the singularly sentimental simian will rampage down 42nd Street not just once, but twice! (Must be those painted ladies he remembers from his earlier visit, or maybe he just enjoys the Lullaby of Broadway.)

In any case, the aristocratic ape will participate in the bicentennial with a vengeance, appearing in both the Universal and Dino DeLaurentiis/Paramount productions. Rather than collaborate, a la **The Towering Inferno**, both companies are charging hell-bent-for-leather to be first in the great ape race.

Universal will apparently get the jump on the shaggy-ape story, with principal photography beginning early January under the title **The Legend of King Kong**. Joseph (Colossus: **The Forbin Project**) Sargent will direct, augmenting the anthropoid's acoustics with Universal's patented Sensurround for the fall of 76. The company claims moral, if not legal, rights to the property, based on a "gentleman's agreement" with RKO for first crack at the remake rights. **The Legend of King Kong** will exploit a few legal loopholes by being based on a literary work, the novel **King Kong** by Delos W. Lovelace, based on the screenplay by James Creelman and Ruth Rose from a story by Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper.

Fay Wray, the original Kong-cutie is being approached for a bit part in Universal's new film, while the usual Redford, Newman, Reynolds, etc. crowd is being considered for the Carl Denham and John Driscoll roles.

DeLaurentiis' production of **King Kong** is a legitimate remake of the 1933 film, acquired by a "first with the most" money deal, but is much slower taking off, lacking the big-studio push of its rival.

Millions will be spent on both productions, and virtually identical scripts are unavoidable, from Skull Island to New York City. But this may be one time when competition and similarity will breed success, as audiences around the world crowd in to see just who has the bigger, better and badder Kong.

The Hindenburg will be destroyed for the second time in 36 years, under the direction of Robert (**Andromeda Strain**) Wise. George C. Scott and Anne Bancroft star in this historic disaster opus, which has had an element of international intrigue spliced into its mainbrace to help provide dramatic and character developing elements. The creative use of original documentary footage of the disaster is combined with elaborate black-and-white and color special effects to create the disaster-spectacular of the Winter cinema season.

Lucky Lady

Lucky Lady

Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother

Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother

Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother

Another big production coming up soon will be Nicholas Meyer's fateful teaming of Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud in **The Seven Per-cent Solution**. Alan Arkin, Vanessa Redgrave, Robert Duvall, Laurence Olivier, Samantha Eggar and Joel Grey star in a flavorful adaptation of Meyer's novel, which will probably do for Sherlock Holmes what **Murder on the Orient Express** did for Agatha Christie last year. In this case however, Holmes will have a distinct advantage, since Meyers' novel was a fictional addition to the fictional character's life, and designed to engage 70's sensibilities through a voyeuristic scrutiny of his drug withdrawal, sexual abstinence and Moriarty fixations. Universal's hopes of a successful book to film transfer are evident in light of the fact that they have bought, sight unseen, Meyers sequel, tentatively titled **The West End Horror**. Again Meyers will do both book and screenplay.

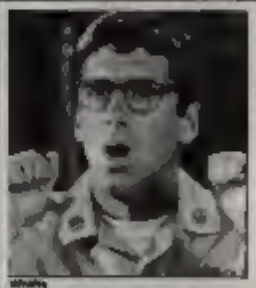
William (**French Connection, Exorcist**) Friedkin has signed a deal with Universal that will encompass several multi-million dollar projects in the near future. The first film, however, will cost only $1 million (small for Friedkin), and will follow in the footsteps of **The Exorcist** as a new extension of the horror form. Apparently a pet project from an idea Friedkin conceived himself, the film is titled **A Safe Darkness**, starring Kelli Dullea and Anthony Perkins, and its plot is being kept very secret in order to preserve its impact.

Second project in the director's deal will be **Sorcerer**, an expensively budgeted ($11 million) remake of the 1953 French film **The Wages of Fear**, in which two truckloads of nitroglycerine are packed across rocky ground. Action and adventure in the classic mold, **Sorcerer** is, according to Friedkin, "similar to **Treasure of the Sierra Madre** and **Bridge on the River Kwai**."

Pirates and swashbuckling derring-do come next in the $9 million production of **Blarney Cock**, starring Robert Shaw, Peter Boyle and Beau Bridges. Set to begin filming soon, it will feature the $1 and a half million reconstruction of Sir Francis Drake's flagship *The Golden Hind*.

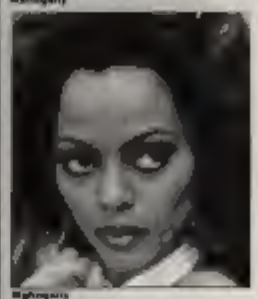
Science-fiction is on the schedule in the form of a Universal/Paramount remake of 1951's **When Worlds Collide**. The **Jaws** production team of Zanuck and Brown will underwrite the project, and Anthony (**Clockwork Orange**) Burgess will adapt the Philip Wylie-Kenneth Gulmar novel into screenplay form.

A Bruce Lee biography is scheduled to go before the cameras soon, based on the book **Bruce Lee and I**, by the Kung-Fu king's widow. The only real difficulty seems to be finding someone who even remotely resembles Lee, and his


Mahogany

Pepper

Mahogany


Mahogany

Mahogany

unorthodox approach to martial arts manipulation.

On the sequel scene, **Sting II** is in the talking stage, while **Jaws II** will reportedly deal with the adventures of Matt Brody's son and the man-eating denizens of the deep. When offered the job of directing **Jaws II**, Steven Spielberg, who skippered the original, declined by labelling sequels as "cheap camy tricks."

At Warner Brothers, the controversial **Superman...The Man** continues to battle its way towards realization, heralded by ever-rising claims of production costs. The latest figure being flaunted before forgotten creators Siegal and Schuster is up to $20 million, and Guy (Goldfinger) Hamilton has been signed to direct from the already completed Mario Puzo screenplay.

Warner's current hit is Ken (Tommy) Russell's rock musical **Lisztomania**. Its the distorted and demented interpretation of Franz Liszt's life, music and dreams, and costars Ringo Starr as The Pope, with a musical score composed and arranged by Rick Wakeman.

The bi-centennial will be greeted by Warner Bros.' **All the President's Men**, a film based on America's most embarassing political escapade. Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman are preparing for early '76 release of the famous project, directed by Alan (Klute) Pakula, and chronicling the Nixon/Watergate exposure and cover-up as reported by Post reporters Bernstein and [redacted].

Irwin (Towering Inferno) Allen is slated to begin work on next Christmas' disaster epic, **The Swarm**, in the joint capacity of producer and director. $8 million will go into this chronicle of the invasion of giant killer bees, to be followed by Allen's biggest, most ambitious film ever, **The Last Ride West**. There are parts for 62 stars in **Last Ride**, and Warner production planners are so staggered by the possible expense, that they refuse to even speculate as to probable cost.

Next, Clint Eastwood returns to his post-Civil War western stamping grounds as both director and star in **The Outlaw—Josey Wales**. Veteran character actors such as Royal Dano and Chief Dan George are also featured in the screenplay by Phil Kaufman, who was also to direct until "creative differences" arose.

Pushed by the largest publicity campaign in 20th's history and part of their "25 for 75" motto, Stanley (Charade) Donen's **Lucky Lady** seems assured of success, thanks to its big box-office cast. Liza Minelli, Burt Reynolds and Gene Hackman star in this 1930's story of rum-running on the California-Mexico coast. The "Lucky Lady" of the title is a racing cutter, which gets the unlucky trio into, and out of, troubles with the police, the underworld and the rum-running kingpins.

Hustle

Hustle

Hustle

The Black Bird

The Black Bird

Gene Wilder makes his directorial debut next, in the slightly fractured fantasy of **The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother**. Madeline Kahn, Marty Feldman and Dom DeLuise star, along with Wilder, who ultimately did triple duty as the film's writer, while playing the part of Sigi Holmes, who is being used by brother Sherlock as a decoy in his ever-constant chase of Moriarty.

Two of 20th's Fall '75 films will be returning on the double-bill route this winter. **Whiffs**, starring Elliot Gould and Jennifer O'Neill is a blackcomedy about a daring daylight robbery of a two-bank town in Utah through the use of laughing gas. **Peeper** is an evocation of the 40's private eye, played by Michael Caine, complete with the spoiled rich girl (Natalie Wood), thugs, rich but greedy uncles, and an impossible case to solve.

Unable to resist a snappy phrase, Paramount has got "19 for 75," which includes a predictable host of pirates, private eyes and sequels.

Currently in release is the Diana Ross' showcase film, **Mahogany**, starring Billy Dee Williams and Nina Foch. Anthony Perkins turns up in **Mahogany** as well, playing the Norman Bates-type character he developed in **Psycho**. The fashion world is the center of attraction for **Mahogany**, and in some strange way, Perkins' part seems right at home in the finale and glitter of international salons.

Next in line is **Hustle**, the story of a Los Angeles cop and a Parisian hooker who find love during a routine murder case which has nothing in particular to do with either of them. Burt Reynolds and Catherine Deneuve star as the cop and the call girl in a grim and tragic big-city detective story directed by Robert Aldrich. Eddie Albert, Ernest Borgnine and Ben Johnson co-star in a tale that has a certain cyclic futility, but is packed with action all the way.

Jack Nicholson and Robert Towne will reteam this year to recreate their **Chinatown** success with the caustic character of J.J. Gittes. Whether Roman Polanski will again direct Nicholson is still speculative. They are however teaming on an entry in the growing swashbuckler genre titled **The Pirates**.

Currently in release from Columbia is their light-hearted sequel to the legendary **Maltese Falcon**, titled **The Black Bird**. George Segal is Sam Spade Jr., who accidently stumbles across the famous statue, only to find himself the target for murder and other Bogart-type mayhem.

Columbia Pictures offers a sentimental look at the Robin Hood legend this Winter with the Richard Lester production of **Robin and Marian**. Sean Connery stars as the bandit of Sherwood in his twilight years with Audrey Hepburn as his Maid Marian.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Killer Elite

Friday Foster

Friday Foster

Robert Shaw portrays the infamous Sheriff of Nottingham, while Richard Harris is cast as King Richard the Lionhearted.

Murder by Death is an original Neil Simon comedy being produced for Columbia with an impressive cast, each of whom is slated to play a take-off on famous fictional sleuth. Already scheduled to appear in the Who dunnit Satire are Eileen Brennan, Truman Capote, James Coco, Peter Falk, Alec Guiness, Elsa Lanchester, David Niven, Peter Sellers, Maggie Smith and Nancy Walker. The gimmick is that they are all gathered to solve a murder that hasn't been committed yet.

In the future from Columbia, John (Wind and the Lion) Milius will write and direct **Give Your Heart to the Hawks**, the story of mountain-man, trail-blazer and fur-trader Jedediah Smith. Peter (Jaws) Benchley's second aquatic thriller, **The Deep**, will begin production this summer, after both the hardcover and paperback versions have had a chance to run their course this Spring.

United Artists' big Christmas present is Jack Nicholson's study of insanity and manipulation, **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**. An all-star cast backs up Nicholson in his bid to take over and hide in an Oregon mental institution, including Louise Fletcher, Scatman Crothers, Michael Douglas and Louise Moritz.

Then, James Coburn stars in the Sam Peckinpah assassination thriller, **The Killer Elite**. Robert Duvall, Arthur Hill, Gig Young and Mako also star in this ruthless manhunt drama, packed with the usual Peckinpah reactio mayhem.

Comic-strip character **Friday Foster** has been turned into a blackaction/adventure flick for American-International's Winter season, written, produced and directed by Arthur Marks. Pam Grier is the famous girl reporter, living and loving her way through death and intrigue, and supported by Yaphet Kotto, Eartha Kitt and Godfrey Cambridge.

Hanna-Barbera, have signed a seven picture deal that does not concern animation of any kind, but rather exploits their talents in the special effects department. The first three pictures will begin filming this Spring under the titles **Cerebus 1**, **The Lupercalia** and **Dante's Inferno**.

Doc Savage apparently leads a charmed life, with a TV series in the wings from 20th-Century Fox, following last year's Warner Bros feature. George Pal is to be executive producer of **Savage**, scheduled as a half-hour CBS "adventure spoof," based on a pilot script by Alvin Saptinsley.

And finally, Milton Subotsky, the man who has control of the **Thonger** and **Spider-Man** film rights, has reportedly gained movie rights to Robert E. Howard's archtypal barbarian hero Conan. Details will be forthcoming in **MEDIASCENE** as they develop.

the company of eagles
MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN
GEORGES GUYNEMER
ROLAND GARROS
EDDIE RICKENBACKER
FRANK LUKE JR
GEORGE HAWKER
STEFANKO

FIGHTING THE AIR WAR IN FILMS, IN PULPS, AND IN THE COMICS

"There shall be wings."

Leonardo Da Vinci made the prophecy in the year 1500 and supplemented his vision with over 50 designs for flying machines. But that vision remained unfulfilled for over four hundred years until, in 904 the Wright brothers made the first successful manned flight. The sky had been conquered. Ten years later the sky would exact its vengeance upon those who sought to conquer it.

In February 913, the British Committee of Imperial Defense was told *"In case of a European War both sides would be equipped with large corps of airplanes, each trying to obtain information of the other and to hide its own movements. The efforts which each would exert in order to hinder or prevent the enemy from obtaining informa-*

tion would lead to the most able result in war in the air by armed airplanes against each other. This fight for the supremacy of the air in the future wars will be of the greatest importance."

That "European War" suddenly exploded into a full scale international conflict in August 1914. The dawn of World War revealed every nation without a single aircraft designed for warfare. Up to this point the only function of the airplane was to scout, spot and report the position of the enemy.

The military establishment took immediate steps to wrench their supremacy from the skies. Sketches were torn off drawing tables and traced full size in chalk on walls. Planes were conceived, designed, built and flown within a space of four to six weeks. Flying was empirical; progress was spectacular.

When the aerial war began, Germany had a collection of 318 planes; France had 82, the British Royal Flying Corps had 78, less than half of which could fly. The English Channel Pilots were recruited from the ranks of airplane pioneers, stunt flyers, inventors, adventurers and, of course, the military.

Initially airborne combatants scored the first kills with rifles they had stowed in the open cockpits in case the enemy came close enough. Several Allied pilots are credited with shooting down German planes with revolvers. Some pilots, like Russian ace Staff Captain Alex Kazakov, used an even more unlikely method of engaging the enemy. He towed a grappling hook below his plane for the purpose of ripping up a fragile section of his opponents aircraft.

Firing a handgun from a plane at a moving target however, was almost an impossibility and it remained for Roland Garros, a French stunt pilot, to arrive at a solution. His idea was to mount a machine gun in this case, a Hotchkiss automatic rifle on the cowling in front of the cockpit and simply point the plane at the enemy. Garros bolted steel wedges onto the propeller to deflect any bullets which might not pass between the blades.

Garros scored two kills during his first flight with the new equipment.

His innovation had turned the airplane into a deadly killing machine and revolutionized modern warfare. During the next few days he destroyed three more Germ an planes before he fou nis propeller to pieces and was forced to land behind enemy lines.

The Germans captured Garros and his "secret weapon" and requested Dutch aeronautics engineer Anthony Fokker to equip German planes with similar devices. Instead, within 48 hours, he brilliantly devised a simple synchronizing cam which fired bullets only when the propeller was clear. Fokker nicknamed the Flying Dutchman, mounted an air-cooled Spandau on an E 1 (or Eindecker-monoplane) and initiated the period known as "the Fokker Scourge."

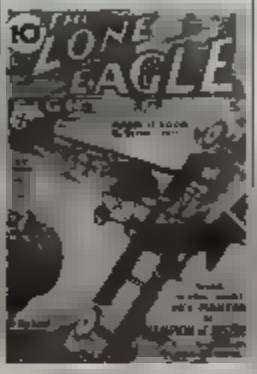
The Allied planes were outmatched until their French Nieuport scouts were equipped with Lewis machine guns mounted on the top wing which fired over the propeller.

By the summer of 1916, the British and French airmen had regained their superiority. Their policy was to penetrate enemy territory for the sole purpose of engaging and shooting down planes.

The Germans simply waited for them inside their own lines.

Germany had realized it was time to change tactics. Top German pilot Oswald Boelcke was given the Kaiser's approval to organize the country's air power and re-establish their supremacy in the skies. He became the Father of Pursuit Aviation by creating the Jagdstaffel (literally hunting echelon) or Jasta for short.

Seven Jastas were formed. Usually containing from 14 to 15



planes, Jasta 2 was commanded by Boelcke himself who lectured on flying, demonstrated his techniques and drilled his men intensely. Flying with Boelcke were Max Immelmann, the Eagle of Lille; Hans Joachim Buddecke, the Shooting Hawk; Rudolph Berthold, the Iron Knight; Edward Ritter von Schleich, the Black Knight; and, of course, Rittmeister Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen.

Flying in tight formations in their new Albatros D-1's (the first twin-gun fighter plane in the war) the Jastas kept their airways clear until the Allies once again regained domination of the skies with the aid of synchronized machine guns on their planes in 917 during "Bloody April."

This was the year of the fighter pilot. The skies took their toll

range as hundreds of massive dogfights were fought between the Allied aircraft and the deadly German "Circuses." Pilots guided their machines in bloody duels 20,000 feet in the air in the most lethal combat since the days of medieval knighthood.

Men became heroes overnight. Pilots often slept under the wings of their planes. Mechanics performed near-miracles overhauling the primitive engines and repairing exhaustive damages acquired during the morning flights. The word Ace became a popular term on both sides. It described an airman with five or more aerial victories to his credit.

French aces included men like Rene Fonck (75 kills), Georges Guynemer (54 kills), Rene Dorme (23 kills), Charles Nungesser (45 kills), and Armand Pinsard (37 kills). The United States' only Escadrille had aces like Eddie Rickenbacker (26 kills), Frank Luke, Jr (19 kills), Raoul Lufbery (17 kills) and David Putnam (12 kills). Germany's aces rallied men like Ernst Udet (62 kills), Werner Voss (48 kills), Lothar von Richthofen (40 kills), Max Muller (36 kills) and Hermann Goering (22 kills). Great Britain's top aces were Eugene Mannock (73 kills), William Bishop (72 kills), James McCuddon (57 kills), Albert Ball (44 kills) and, perhaps, WWI's best all-around airman, William Barker (53 kills).

It is around the exploits of these men and their companions that the flying legends of World War I were built. All the honor, glory and chivalry that the war lords embraced belongs to them. Those men, those deeds, spawned a profusion of entertainments that ranged from historically factual to outrageously fantastic.

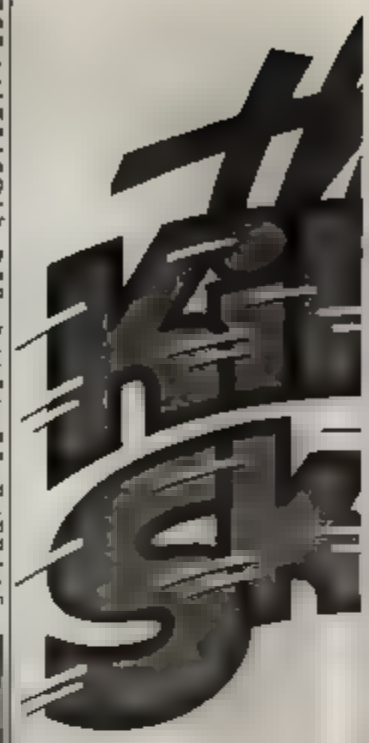
Capturing all its movement and excitement, the cinema made its own use of the air war. Finding it financially viable and artistically solid material for film, motion picture makers played out their dramas of men and machines, swooping and climbing through the dawning skyscrapes, in perfect accord with its cinematic medium.

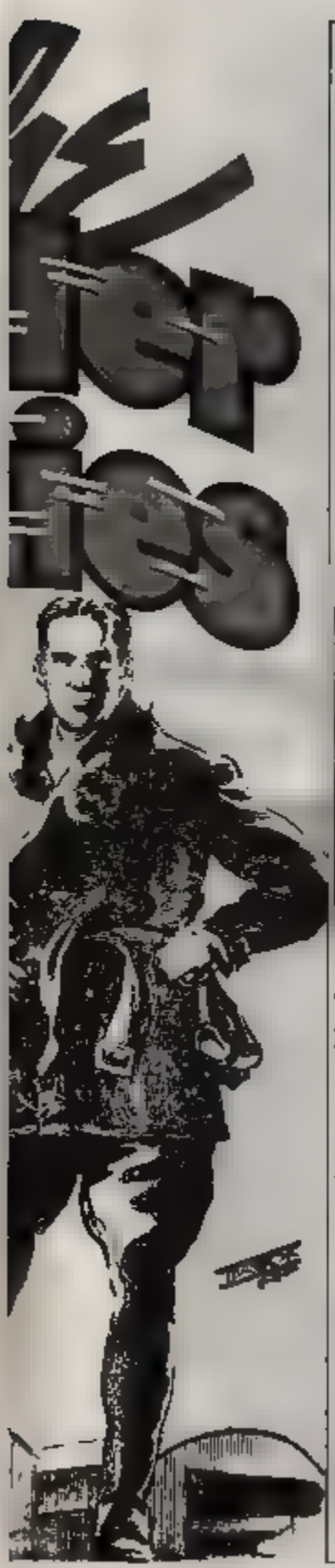
Hollywood produced a triumvirate of all classics: William Wellman's **Wings**, Howard Hughes' **Hell's Angels** and Howard Hawks' **Dawn Patrol** (Hawks himself was a WWI pilot). Other films would be made over the years but none would match the heights of achievement found in these three.

Meanwhile, the pulps began to capitalize on the killer skies.

As one of the most popular sellers in the Air Hero genre, **G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES** scored the greatest number of kills. Against a crimson WWI sky filled with Bristols, Fokkers, Hanriots, Nieuports, Pfalz Albatros, Halberstadts and Spads, G-8 flew a total of 1 0 missions. He was an airborne master spy who frequently appeared in disguise, a skill taught to him by his manservant, Battle.

G-8 was accompanied by ex-pilot stu Burt Martin and the diminutive Nippy Weston in assaults against the *Squadron of Corpses, Patrol of the Cloud Cruiser, Wings of Invisible Death, The Gorilla Stalker, Scourge of the Steel Mask, Fangs of the Sky Leopard, Vultures of the White Death, Flight of the Damned, The Black Aces of Doom, Sky Doffins of Satan, Wings of the Dragon Lord, Hordes of the*





Wingless Death, and *The Death Master's Last Patrol*. Covers were painted by Fred Blakeslee with interiors by John Fleming Gould.

When G-8 throttled his Spad all the 'manly' readers gripped their chairs preparing not only for a flight into enemy territory but an excursion into fantasy. Tales blended outrageous mixtures of science fiction, the supernatural and aircraft action into collision-course novels of unbridled imagination.

Behind each bizarre threat lurked a mad German scientist hoping his plot would be the one to end the Allied Resistance. It never did. Sooner or later each one would find himself in the crosshairs of G-8's thundering weapons. Pages roared with obligatory dogfight prose: "*Pressing his trigger button, he sent warning bursts from his chattering Vickers guns. He heard Nippy and Butt do the same as they skimmed close beside him.*

"*At that instant the Jerry flight broke up with startling abrupt ness. Three Fokkers, including that of the leader, zoomed sheerly and screamed skyward. The other two continued to come on straight.*

"*Immediately G-8 saw the trick. The three were to come up a second after the fight started. It was a clever ruse to divert attention—to split up G-8's flight and cause him to hesitate for that vital second of time that would either spell defeat or victory.*

"*But as the Yanks neared, they held their course for the two lower Fokkers. Suddenly, G-8's right arm went up into the air and across like a saber slash. Wam.*

"*Hisses greeted. The Spads screamed as their wires knifed the air. The Spads plunged down.*

"*Tac-tac-tac! Vickers guns went mad in short bursts. White tracers flailed out—into the two Fokkers, that returned the fire with their flaming Spandau guns.*

"*Then abruptly the noses of the three Spads shot into the air straight for the three Jerry crates above, leaving one Fokker burning down in flames from the fire of G-8's guns and the other trying desperately to turn while there was time.*

"*Tac-tac-tac! Tac-tac-tac!*

"*Nosed almost straight up into the sun, the Vickers guns of G-8 and his Battle Aces blasted again. The three Fokkers were already slanting down, yellow flames streaking from the flame-tipped muzzles of their Spandaus.*"

The G-8 saga was the creation of ex-pilot Robert Jasper Hogan. Born in 1897 he was raised in Bucksin, New York under the stringent inflexible eye of his minister father. A life in the service of the cloth held no appeal for Hogan, whose athletic prowess exerted its influence early. After graduating from St. Lawrence University where he was an amateur boxer Hogan went west for a term of bronc-busting. Drawin' an' Quawlin'. WWI found him in the U.S. Aviation Service, flying had ultimately captured his fancy.

Hogan began to elaborate on his flying experiences and turned to the pulps for an outlet. His early air tales made him a natural for G-8 and found his wings in October 1933. Besides scripting a number of other pulp novel heroes, Hogan occasionally wrote all the fillers in the G-8 book including the RED FALCON, SMOKEWADE and GREASEBALL JOE series. When G-8 was grounded in December 1942, Hogan authored a variety of fiction that included a number of hardbound western novels. He passed away in Miami, Florida in 1963. His obit credited him as being "*One of the nation's most prolific pulp writers.*"

Three years after Hogan's death, G-8 appeared in a one-shot comic book entitled **G-8 And The Secret Weapon**.

G-8 had set the record for skybound swashbuckling. But for years he had scored wing clip to wing tip with another aerial ace who sought to command the airbourne pulp market: **THE LONE EAGLE**.

Written by Lieutenant Scott Morgan, the Lone Eagle soloed in his own book for a full 75 missions beginning in September 1933. The title character was John Masters, a special operative for American Air Intelligence in France.

The Lone Eagle took to the killer skies in pursuit of the *Winged Peril*, *The Vultures of Doom*, *Satan's Armada*, *the Phantom Aces*, *Murder Patrol*, *the Wings of Disaster*, *the Sky Crusader* and *the Champion of Destiny*" and the "*Sky Hellions*." He took his final flight in the Spring of 1943, literally a victim of the World War 2 Aces who crowded him out of the skies and off the newsstands.

Coincidentally, the first air-war magazine **AIR STORIES**, had hit the stands the very day Lindbergh landed in Paris after the first transatlantic flight. It was followed by pulps like **ACES**, **BATTLE BIRDS**, **DAREDEVIL ACES**, **SKY FIGHTERS**, **WAR BIRDS** and **WINGS**. Each was brimming with romanticized tales of the 1914-1918 aerial conflict. Allied airmen were invariably handsome and heroic. Germans were ruthless and cruel. Spads and Bristols were always hopelessly outnumbered by hideous jagdes of air that persistently bred out of the sun. The 'Red Baron' was shot down in flames again and again by a score of British or French or American pilots. The pulps, it seems, invented the "Chivalry" of WWI airborne warfare.

Ironically all the pulp aces who flew to their glory in World War 1 became victims of World War 2 which avariciously devoured the pulp paper needed to produce their magazines. Another factor was the growth of an exciting new popular art form—comic books. The pulps strove unsuccessfully against the explosive excitement of this new four-color wonder.

The comic books had turned their attention to another war. They became a forceful and influential propaganda machine beckoning America's youth about their nation's might and majesty. A multitude of super wingmen soared out o the comic pages to shoot down their foes like flaming comets: Blackhawk, Airboy, Captain Midnight, Skywolf, Iron Ace, The Bald Eagle, Hop Harrigan, The Flying Fool, The Flying Dutchman, Captain K of the RAF, Chipper Kirk, Skyman, Suicide Smith, The Sky Rangers, The Phantom Eagle and countless others. By necessity, all were WW2 pilots. The scarlet cloudscapes, and the fragile biplanes and triplanes had been forgotten.

As World War 2 faded from the headlines to wing its way into history, people discovered that it, like the previous war had failed to make the world safe for democracy or peace. More wars would follow for America, now cast as a reluctant leader of the Allies.

It was during the early fifties, amidst an air of disillusionment that comic books rediscovered the air conflict of World War 1. No longer was it referred to as the 'Great War.' Perhaps we were older and wiser now and maybe just a bit more jaded and cynical as well. At any rate, a growing feeling was emerging that it was no longer right and

proper to die for one's country.

Harvey Kurtzman, the man behind the war comics published by the famous EC group, implicitly expressed that attitude in his books.

Kurtzman revealed, "*We used to have this argument when I was doing the war stories. One of the guys started with used to ask me all the time, 'Why don't you make it glamorous?' and to me that's what a terrible notion, what a twisted, what a perverted attitude, to want to make war glamorous.*"

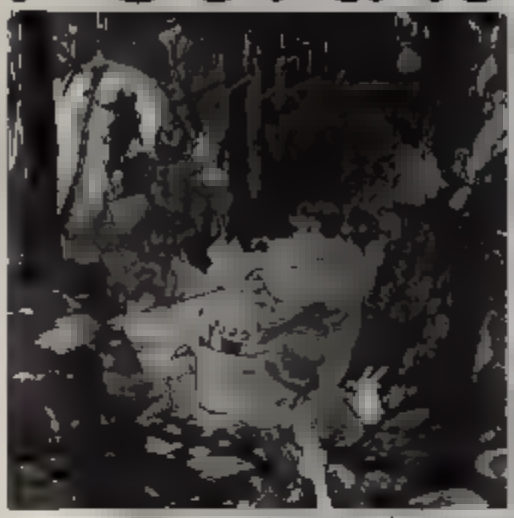
He didn't glamorize war but captured the raw drama, the pathos, the heartbreak, and yes, even the glory of war.

A stickler for accuracy Kurtzman insisted on precision undreamed of in the pulp days. He would send his staff to military bases and libraries, insisting that work be done directly from life, or failing that, from photographs. Drawing from one or two art style's work meant wavering down another forty another degree.

In his **FRONTLINE COMBAT** and **TWO-FISTED TALES**, Kurtzman frequently used the warring skies of WWI as a background against which he juxtaposed his morality dramas. Yet it was not Kurtzman but his able colleague Al Feldstein who destined to edit the ultimate comic book about a dying age during the dying days of EC.

ACES HIGH (March 1955) was the first of two EC magazines devoted to the air combat of World War 1. Feldstein's scripts were excellent, and EC's finest artists

POSTERS



BAD DOIN'S
BERNI WRIGHTSON

Any number of artists have managed to earn a degree. Just as many are successful portraying the weird and bizarre. But few can handle gallows humor like Berni Wrightson, who's just created his first full-color poster print, **BAD DOIN'S IN KNUCKLEDOWNE LONESOME**. A trio of grisly graverobbers get more than they bargained for. So will you. $3.00 plus 50 postage. Wrightson's better than ever!

LOW TIDE
M. W. KALUTA

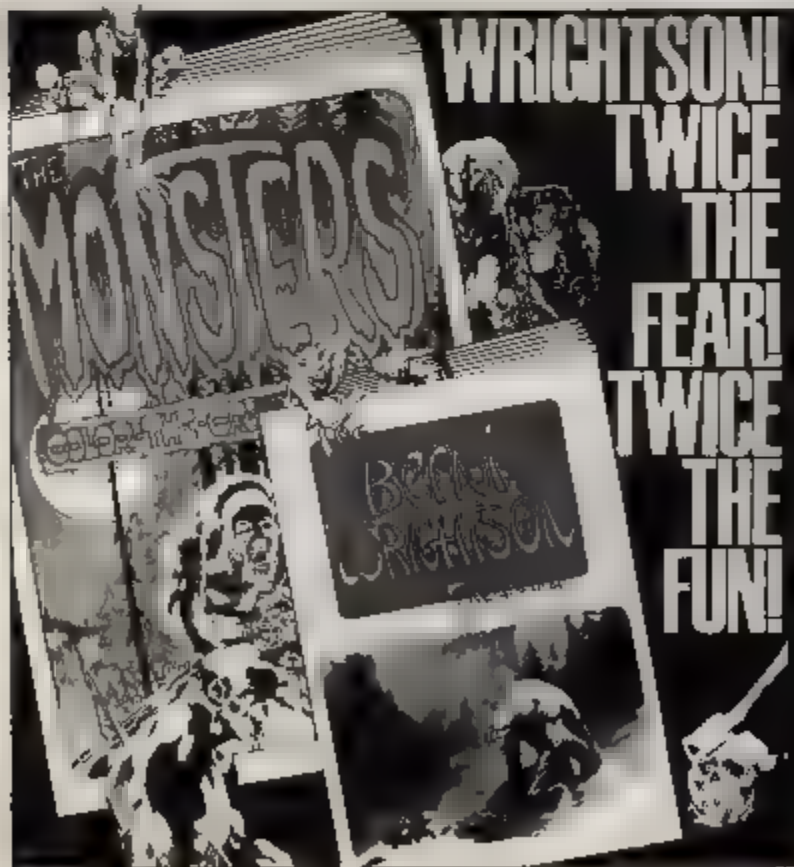
A landscape that vibrates with strange, unearthly colors. Tortured towers of rock reach for the skies as their bases are cruelly eroded by the river's rush. An unexpected wind whistles ominously through the canyon, making the twisted trees and sparse shrubbery shiver at its touch. Overlooking the scene, a bizarre dome-like structure with the mystic symbol of a half-moon perched above the entrance. LOOK is that two mermaids sunbathing on a mossy ledge? It all happens once upon a time in Mike Kaluta's **LOW TIDE** $3.00 plus 50 postage.

Cover your ears—don't listen to the **WIZARD'S KNELL**. No one knows what it means, but there are tales told about what happens when the bells chime their unworldly symphony. Sometimes you can see them. figures clad in black robes, conjuring hellborn images in the flames that surround them. Don't watch the rituals they perform, don't witness their unholy incantations. But most of all, don't listen to the singing of the bells, the chimes called the **WIZARD'S KNELL**. Mike Kaluta did *He hasn't been the same since*. $3.00 plus 50 postage. Use the order form on page 35.

WIZARD'S KNELL
M. W. KALUTA

SUPER HEROES
NEAL ADAMS

Neal Adams has drawn countless hundreds and illustrated dozens of comic super heroes, but he's only created one poster which features all his greatest characters. Here on this large 17" x 24" full-color reproduction Neal Adams recalls DEADMAN the relentless, red-clad avenger who haunted the comics of 100 briefly in the late 60's; THE SPECTRE is also on hand, gesturing grimly toward the destiny of master criminals, while below THE GREEN ARROW prepares to shaft those who stand in the path of justice. An action figure of BATMAN completes the quartet. $3.00 plus 50 postage for **HEROES**.



WRIGHTSON! TWICE THE FEAR! TWICE THE FUN!

[illegible] the imagination of the comic buying reader and emerged an [illegible] following of admirers as has Berni Wrightson. Beginning with his early work in fan magazines in the late 1960's, Wrightson has steadily grown as an artist, constantly polishing his penciling technique and unique approach to storytelling. Almost single handedly he has brought back the unforgettable macabre atmosphere of the EC era with his ever special bag of tricks using a series of fine lines like a sculptor would use a chisel, an offbeat and often unexpected use of black shadows resembling [illegible] lurking in them, and as result a collection of phantasmagorias to be found this side of Rembrandt, Poe or Roger Corman. Two new books have just been published featuring the awesome art of Berni Wrightson. **MONSTERS** is a colossal 11" x 17" volume, the size of which gives ample warning to the scope of the horrors within. Subtitled as the "Color-the-Creature Book," **MONSTERS** is really a handsome, quality printed portfolio of the gruesome and the grotesque. Each page reproduces a fantastic single illustration conjured up by Wrightson's enchanted brush: a Vampire, Ghoul, Ghost, Mummy, Werewolf, Alien, Cyclops, Frankenstein, Mad Monster, Zombie, Goblins, Creeping Dead, Sea Monsters, Witch and Swamp Creature. Each ravishing rendering is accompanied by an equally [illegible] and [illegible] by [illegible] **MONSTERS** [illegible] and is available for $4.00 plus [illegible] postage. **THE BERNI WRIGHTSON SKETCHBOOK** is the definitive book on the artist and his work, a 92-page volume bound beneath full-color glossy covers. Actually three books in one, the first section of the **BOOK** is devoted to a lengthy interview in which Wrightson discusses his past, present and future, his achievements, his failures and his philosophy toward art. Section two is a comprehensive collection of illustrations culled from the earliest fanzines right up to the present, and includes drawings rendered in pencil, ink, wash and multimedia. Part three runs a complete checklist of Wrightson's contributions in story pages—comics, hardbound book covers, magazines, paperbacks, posters and program books. As a bonus, there's a complete story reprinted from **Web of Horror** in addition to three rare fanzine pages. A collector's edition for $5 plus 50 postage.

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contributed: Bernie Krigstein with his experimental panel breakdowns; Jack Davis with his unique super rendering style; and even Wally Wood, striving mightily to prove that he could draw dogfights every bit as complex as the interiors of his spaceship.

The greatest contribution to the magazine, however, came from a World War I aircraft authority who just happened to be an excellent artist as well. George Evans, who had previously worked for aeronautical magazines, wrote some of the stories, drew all the covers and illustrated a profusion of interior work as well.

All of the *ACES HIGH* tales were good, but one by Evans entitled *The Green Kids*, stands out as particularly excellent. The story told how flight leader Major Joe Caswell mercilessly insulted and badgered his C.O. Jack Ross, whom he regarded as a butcher for sending untrained pilots to their doom. *"What are you made of, anyway, Ross? GRANITE on the outside? ICE WATER on the inside? Don't you CARE about the green kids you send up? Don't those names you broke out disturb your SLEEP?"*

But Ross' moment came. He patiently endured the insubordination, until he was promoted to a higher position and Caswell became the new C.O. Caswell was smug about his new command. *"If you think I'm going to be like YOU were,"* he sneered, *"GUESS AGAIN, Ross."*

It was not long before Caswell had occasion to telephone the replacement center's C.O. Col. Winters. *"I'm calling for two REPLACEMENTS!"* he barked. *"And if you're going to send any more five hour solo kids, don't bother. I won't fly them!"*

Winters was not impressed. *"You're beginning to sound like Ross!"* he drawled.

"Ross?"

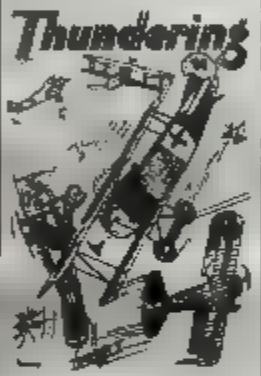
"That's right. Ross tried to move heaven and earth to prevent green pilots from being sent up. He fought it down the line from Paris to Washington. He got nowhere. Neither will you. So save your breath and my time!"

The captain for the next panel explained that the next morning was to be *"different. very different."* It was indeed. Now it was Caswell's turn. He seemed to age years as he sent the new replacements into the waiting skies. Captain Vicks, his old wingman, began to react just as Caswell did once. But his chance would come too, someday.

The Green Kids was of course, inspired by Edmond Gouldings 1938 remake of *Dawn Patrol* with Errol Flynn in the Caswell role, Basil Rathbone in Ross' part and David Niven as Vicks. Flynn and Niven played "Courtney" and "Scott" (names which would be used affectionately in other *ACES HIGH TALES*) who flew against the Jagdstaffel of von Richter."

Even though they featured the finest scripts and art in the entire history of comics, *EC* folded, and *ACES HIGH* with it.

There were other air war stories. Atlas (ground out war magazines by the dozens), while Superman's corporate captains at National Periodicals did their best to keep pace. Many of the stories were very good, especially from the illustrative standpoint. Artists like Russ Heath, Gene Colan, Bob Powell and

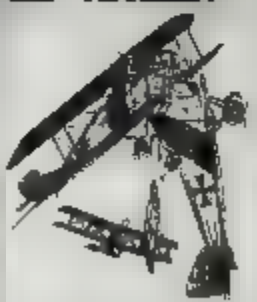


John Severin illustrated the war yarns with grim realism. But their concern was with WW2 aviation.

Atlas (the 1950's name for Marvel), would eventually discontinue the war books and concentrate on westerns and Supernatural magazines. DC alone remained to carry on the war and most of the time they appeared to need foreign aid. Or domestic aid. Any aid at all would have helped.

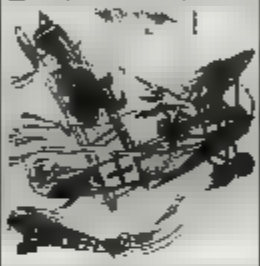
In those days, when DC editorships could best be understood as feudal baronies, Robert Kanigher was lord of the war comics, and inexplicably of *WONDER WOMAN* also. Kanigher had talent. He understood the comic medium and knew how to write a good story. Often a good story. Even so, Kanigher's work was frequently uneven, ranging from a level of achievement to adequate to aggravating.

The knights of Kanigher's realm were many and talented and among them, Russ Heath was one of the most exceptional. Heath who began his career in the 40's, had worked for almost every company publishing comics in the 50's. Heath's most memorable story was based on an actual WWI flying ace, in *ALL-AMERICAN MEN OF WAR* No. 112 (Nov. 1965). Heath



introduced us to Steve Savage–Balloon Buster. Savage when in battle, thought of himself as a gun, rather than a human being. In trying to prove himself, he destroyed three barrage balloons and two German aircraft. However his action cost the lives of two wingmen, who were shot down covering him.

Savage's real life counterpart



was Lieutenant Frank Luke, also known as "The Balloon Buster." Luke fought a one-man war against the giant gas-filled German balloons. In seventeen days, he shot down fourteen balloons and four planes.

Arizona born, Luke was one of the most insubordinate pilots in the First World War. He so aggravated his commanding officer Captain Grant, that Grant once said: *"I'm going to recommend him for the Distinguished Service Cross. Then, by God, I'm going to court-martial him."*

Luke was saved from a court-martial by the arrival of Grant's superior Major Hartney. Luke asked Hartney for permission to get three balloons over Verdun and was granted that permission. Luke took to the air ... was to be his last mission. Luke was the most spectacular of the American Aces. A flyer unique in the annals of the air. He died as he lived, a rebel to the last. The Balloon Buster series (*MEN OF WAR* 2, 113, 14, 6) was a most fitting memorial of Frank Luke's career.

It was Joe Kubert however who would emerge as DC's top war artist. Kubert equally at ease with the subject matter as Heath maintained his lead position by virtue of his handling of the comics foremost war strip, *SGT. ROCK*. Kubert's illustration was flawless, his storytelling superb. His pencil drawings embossed a wide selection of perfectly chosen cinematic effects. His bold rugged brush rendering often telling more about the texture of war than the scripts.

Kubert damned the details. He was an impressionist and his was a war of violent emotions where even the heroes were often the victims. What Kirby was to the supermen, as Severin was to the Western, so was Kubert to the war comics.

It was Kanigher though, who decided to try a bold, new experiment in comics. Always on the alert for new material, he happened to come upon a sheaf of notes he had made over the years in his career as a comic book scriptwriter.

"On one of those scraps of paper," Kanigher remembered, *"I had written words like Jagdstaffel, trenches, dogfight, Fokker triplane, Spandaus, Red Baron. They were obviously notes made as background material for an old story in one of my war books. Together they conjured up images of the air battles of World War I but with a difference. I began to write a script for a new series—a story from the enemies point of view. BECAME ENEMY ACE!"*

Irwin Donenfeld, then editorial director at National, gave his approval to the idea.

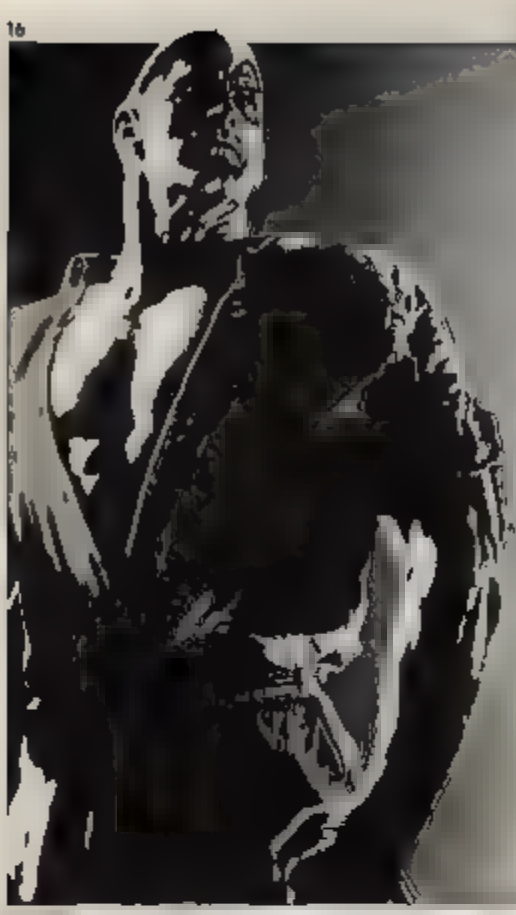
"Joe Kubert is the only one in the field who has an emotional, linear plastic line that perfectly matches my own writing," Kanigher revealed. Teaming up, the two men became a lethal combination creating an unforgettable moment in the history of comics. That moment manifested itself in the form of a searing question mark on the cover of *OUR ARMY AT WAR* no. 15.

"Who is the blazing ENEMY we dared not show on the cover?" the caption asked. A 15-page interior story gave the answer.

"Here for the first time is the savage battle to the death for the skies of 1918 in World War I. It will be revealed entirely by the ENEMY! In searing words from the blazing battle diary of a 'human killing machine' Reichsritter Hans Von Hammer ENEMY ACE!"

The opening splash panel depicted the German Ace scoring his 50th kill against a flaming Nieuport. The pilot inside saluted Von Hammer through the billowing smoke. Kubert's visualization of the teutonic ace of aces showed him as a steely-eyed, tight-lipped cross between Maximilian Schell and Jack Palance on a bad day.

Kanigher in that first story established all the elements that were to be used throughout the life of the strip. Whether by accident or deliberation he forged a two-dimensional characterization for Enemy Ace that made an incisive and powerful



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They're here—a deadly dozen demure but devilish damsels in a super pin-up calendar featuring twelve of the most torrid and terrific temptresses you'll ever see! We've named them **The Supergirls** because they're super-sweet super-sleek and super-sophisticated—all drawn with tender loving care by Steranko, who spared no effort in the nation-wide research on the subject. **The Supergirls**—an inspired calendar an inspired collectors item—is a giant 24" by 18" in size, and comes in a plain brown tube for just $3.50 plus .50 postage.

X-RATED X-PLOITS OF SWEET GWENDOLYN

From out of the past comes the bizarre exploits of the 1940's underground heroine. **The Adventures of Sweet Gwendolyn**. The book features four cartoon adventure serials that read like X-rated versions of the *Perils of Pauline*, replete with a dastardly villain, a mysterious countess, and a secret agent—all of whom do their best to keep Gwen under wraps, be they leather rubber rope or chain—while artist John Willie did his best to save her. 140 pages, 16 in color $12.95 plus 50 postage. You MUST be 18 to order.

LAST CHANCE TO GRAB THE PAPER GIRLS

In response to the interest generated by our special pin-up issue (**MEDIASCENE 8**), we have acquired a small number of copies of the French book **Les Filles Du Papier** (*The Paper Girls*). This 130-page volume contains a wealth of sensational art illustrating the captivating beauty of the girls of the comics. American, European and underground artists are all represented in this hard to find item, with 32 pages in full, flashy color. We only have a few of these scorchers, available now for only $5.00 plus .50 postage and handling. For readers 18 or over, please!

contempt about the brutal stupidity of war.

In his relationship with his men, Von Hammer was both admired and feared. His pilots were proud to serve under him, but often felt that he expected too much of them and was insensitive to their feelings. In point of fact, Von Hammer was hyper-sensitive, and a shrewd judge of character as well: if he had any faults as a leader it was his self-centered introspection. A man who demanded much of himself, he expected no less from others.

Von Hammer felt no joy in killing—for him it was a grim, ghastly business. It wounded him to remain outwardly stoical while his men accused him of being a ruthless misanthrope. His victory cups, prized by his orderly, were symbols of valiant men who had, in Von Hammer's view, need ssly met their deaths.

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Von Hammer's only friend and companion, and one of Kanigher's slickest "quirks", was a coal-black wolf, in whose company Von Hammer often lapsed into dramatic monologues. "I have learned the cold truth that YOU were born with—there is no room for anyone else in the lonely business of killing!"

Or consider this example: "We are NI companions for the hunt, we two! Both of us were born to KILL whether we wished to or not. It is KILL or be KILLED here on the ground—just as it is in the air!"

Or, "We both hunt because we must! You, for food myself, for my country—for my honor! You have no need for cooked meat—yet find you more civilized than many humans have known." Clearly Von Hammer viewed killing as both a necessity and a duty, a duty which revolted him.

The final and most significant element in the strip was Von Hammer's blood-red Fokker triplane. To the enemy it was a icon of terror. To the men of his Jagdstaffel it represented authority, but to Von Hammer himself, his plane was a dramatic symbolization pointing up the absurdity of mass mechanical murder. Kanigher sets the tone for the series in the first tale as Von Hammer seems to hear his plane's engine roar its command to him: "Full throttle—Hunter's moon—KILLER'S MOON!"

The man who raced as the pattern for ENEMY ACE was Germany's Rittmeister (Captain or Riding Master) Manfred Von Richthofen, a man equally as fascinating as his fictional counterpart. Von Richthofen commanded, as did Von Hammer, his own Jagdstaffe. Comparisons may also be drawn about the personal philosophies of both aces. Richthofen was a cautious and conservative pilot whose duty was to shoot down the enemy. He was a professional soldier and in that respect no different from Kanigher's "killing machine."

Richthofen's single gesture of ostentation was the color of his plane. Before he assumed command of Jagdstaffel 7, the

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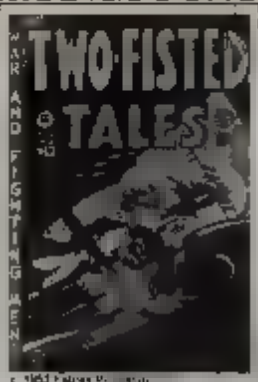
Germans had observed fairly sober color schemes (though Boelcke had an all-black plane and Navarre had flown an all-red Nieuport). Richthofen ignored tradition and painted his six-yard-at first Albatros D-2's and later Fokker Dr.1 triplanes, crimson. Each individual plane in his Jasta bore some distinguishing mark or device in a similar color. Later all Jagdstaffeln adopted bizarre colors and hence earned the name "circuses."

Richthofen became known as the Red Knight because of his all-red aircraft. Von Hammer too soared solely in scarlet, but earned he somewhat less charming name "HAMMER OF Hell." If Von Hammer's many kills strain the credulity of his readers, they have only to study the career of Von Richthofen, who scored 80 kills before he was shot down in the Somme sector behind British lines. He died in 1918 at age 25 and was buried with military honors. Afterward a museum was established in Berlin to display his many trophies.

Such was the man—it was the task of Kanigher and Kubert to take this life, preserving it where prudent, altering it when desirable, and forge it into an artistic synthesis they called ENEMY ACE.

Kubert's art was never better. His imagery was drenched with the color and excitement of the savage skies of World War I. His breakdowns and panel compositions evoked a maximum of thrust and movement on the page. His rendering afforded a grim and relentless mood other artists could only hint at. Enemy Ace soared through magnificent crystalshed cloudscapes. He was



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pursued across naked full moons that stared blindly out of the night sky. The terrain below became a patchwork quilt of fields and streams.

Kanigher's scripts provided a myriad of visual possibilities. Stories opened with screaming planes locked in death struggles and built from there. All the heart and the heartbreak of war were reflected in tales like *The Hunter and the Hunted*, *Death Whispers-Death Screams*, *A Grave in the Sky* and *The Slayer and the Slain*.

Two stories in particular stand out as especially noteworthy. The first, *Enemy Ace Meets The Bull*, appeared in STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES No. 41. As the story opens Von Hammer, having escaped imprisonment by the Allies, is flying over his airfield in a stolen French Spad. Upon landing, he discovers that his triumphant return interrupts a less happy event—a funeral for one of the squadron's pilots. Questioning the dead flyer's younger brother Von Hammer is shocked to hear

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him accuse another Jagdstaffel pilot of murder. "Explain yourself, Ernst!" Von Hammer snapped. "Who killed your brother Karl? Now!"

With tears clouding his eyes, the youth poured out his heart. "A few days ago, a new man was assigned to act as Karl's wingman. He is called the Bull! HE DID IT! As surely as if he himself had triggered the French machine guns that sent Karl crashing to his death!

"Yesterday, Herr Rittmeister, Karl and the Bull were on Patrol when the Bull allowed my brother Karl to meet an enemy Nieuport unprotected! The Bull only saw a chance for PERSONAL glory—at the cost of a fellow pilot's life!"

Angrily, Ernst related how the Bull deserted Karl under fire to attack and destroy a defenseless DH-2 flying with it pursuing the dead plane to the ground. Too callous to even attend Karl's upers, he Bu was now celebrating his "glorious" victory in the town tavern.

Von Hammer did not speak. He was unable to. While his pilots watched in mute silence, he turned abruptly, seized the wheel of his automobile, and roared off towards the town. He found the Bull in the Brauhaus, smashing furniture and bullying patrons.

"I WANT MORE ALE," he bellowed. "To celebrate my victory. I'll send flying any of those who deny me! You dare not refuse one—I am a pilot to Von Hammer's Jagdstaffel—am I not?"

"If you are—" demanded an icy voice behind the unruly Hulk, "then get like one!"

"You are like a wild animal—terrifying everyone who stands in your way! My Jagdstaffel is made up of officers—and gentlemen!"

The Bull turned, spewed insults at his commanding officer and then charged. "STAND WHERE YOU ARE! I do not wish to see you court-martialed for striking a superior officer!" Von Hammer reasoned. But the Bull was beyond all reason—again and again he charged, striking and destroying chairs, tables, walls—everything save his agile target who eventually tired of the game, hoisted his foe into the air and sent him crashing into unconsciousness on the hard floor below.

Von Hammer was not a vindictive man. Back at his quarters he chastised the Bull, but limited the punishment to grounding him for one week. The Bull refused to accept Von Hammer's stringent code of rules. Charging after him, he struck him full in the face,

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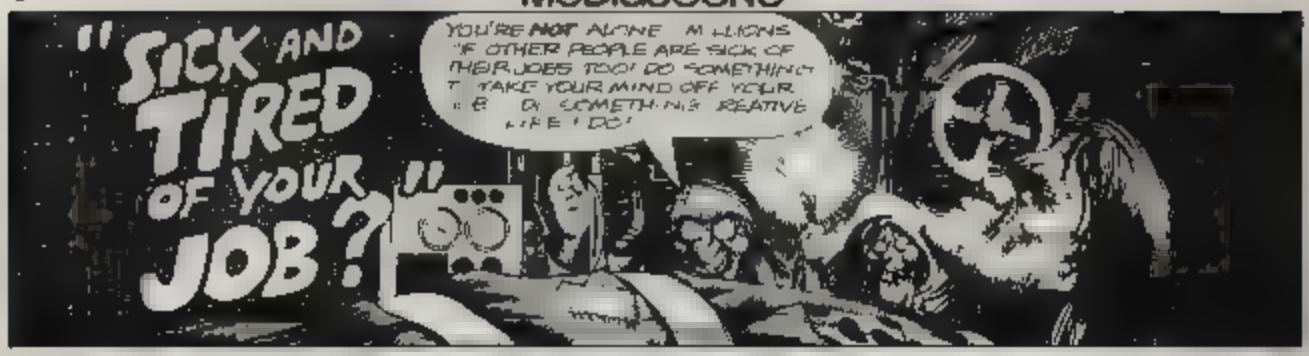
challenging the Hammer of Hell to a duel. Ernst requested and received the honor of seconding Von Hammer.

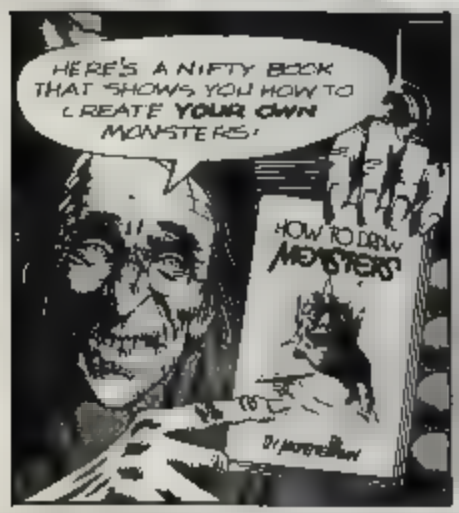
Dawn. Von Hammer strode resolutely to the field. He had not slept, but had spent the night in flight, destroying two enemy planes. Now, his Fokker's engine hummed expectantly as it idled on the landing strip. As controls awaiting the touch of the Ace. Suddenly Ernst stepped forward, demanding the right to face the Bull first and thereby avenge his dead brother. Von Hammer refused, but as Ernst pleaded, the Bull made the decision. "First—a bullet for Ernst, I promise the Hammer of Hell a short visit—then—he will receive the next bullet—between the eyes!"

The count began, the duellists paced away from each other, pistols held upright. On the ninth count, however, the Bull turned and fired, shooting Ernst in the back. Enraged Von Hammer rushed forward, lashing out at his foe with his fists—the final blow sending the Bull reeling backward into the whirling propeller of Von Hammer's Fokker D.R.1.

"Woman's law," Von Hammer's diary records. "I was right—the guilty one had paid the penalty. But in reality—weren't we ALL guilty?"

The second story, *The Devil's General*, appeared in STAR Mo. 143 (March 1969). During a unique and beautiful snow sequence, the *Enemy Ace's*


"SICK AND TIRED OF YOUR JOB?"
YOU'RE NOT ALONE MILLIONS OF OTHER PEOPLE ARE SICK OF THEIR JOBS TOO! DO SOMETHING TO TAKE YOUR MIND OFF YOUR JOB! DO SOMETHING CREATIVE LIKE I DO!



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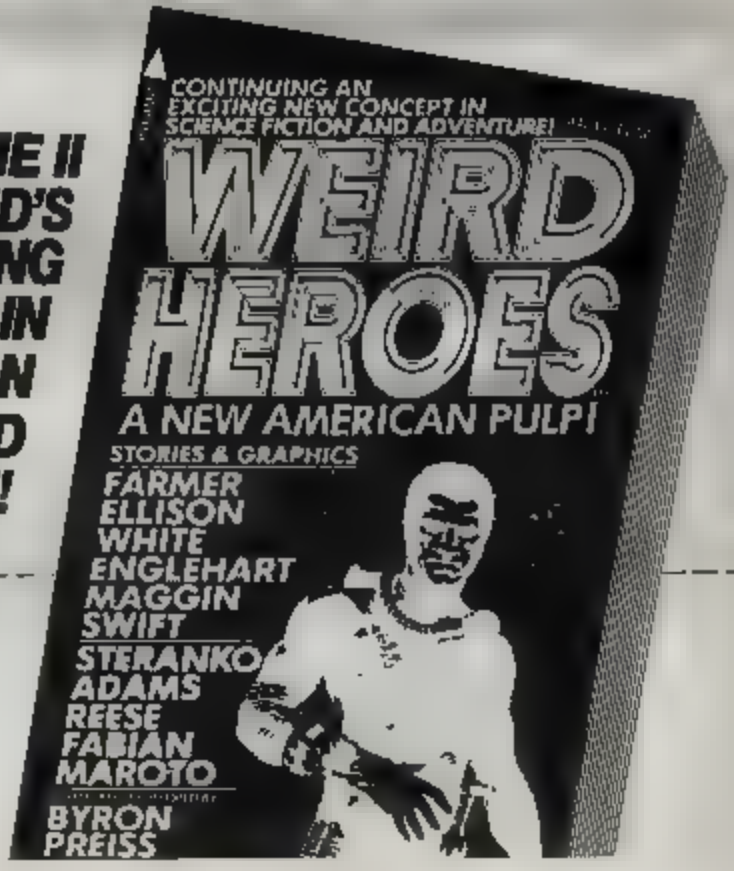

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superior officer places his son in Von Hammer's Jagdstaffel, so that he may "add honor to the name of *Von Klein!*" When the boy is shot down on his first mission (some of Kubert's most sensational dogfight scenes), the angry general sends Von Hammer's men on an endless succession of suicide missions. Von Hammer later learns that Von Klein's son is alive, and executes a daring rescue mission.

"It was a miracle, father! Alone—the Baron entered the castle prison—and rescued me!"

"Yes—well—hmmph. At times, Hammer, Von Hammer had a little choice."

"You are wrong, Herr General!" interrupted Von Hammer. *"I could have allowed you to murder all my brave young pilots for the sake of personal revenge. But—I chose to stop it the choice was MINE! Perhaps in time, the boy you have put on your honor may eventually be*

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disgraced you see the skies need no assistance to wreak vengeance and death!"

Though Von Hammer believed in the importance of personal choice, he was nonetheless a fatalist, superstitious, capable of adopting a stray puppy and carrying him in the air as a good luck mascot. The Rittmeister was fond of referring to the "merciless, killer skies," but it was never the skies that he fought, only human enemies and the war itself. For all his hate of the sky, Von Hammer loved it as well—it was his element, he was at home there, and only there.

What sort of environment could create this most perfect of human killing machines? In tossing us glimpses of his background, Kanigher and Kubert provide the answers—some of them. Von Hammer spent his youth at an ancestral castle near the Black Forest where his family had lived for centuries. His father trained him to assume the honor of the Von Hammer name, tutoring him with pistol, supplementing his lessons with sessions with the famous arms masters of Europe.

On the day he scored a winning touch against the best swordsman in Germany, his father said to him: *"There is little else for you to learn my son—but what I am about to tell you is of MORE importance than the sum total of all your lessons in arms and defense! It is but a word: HONOR. Those battle-flags that hang in our halls are spattered with Von Hammer BLOOD! Not for the flags, my son—but for that which they stand! Never NEVER forget. Above land—before fortune—before victory—comes HONOR!"*

Von Hammer paid for his principles. But doesn't everybody?

Kanigher's writing on the ENEMY ACE stories is invariably his best. Rarely does he employ villains like St. George, a foe who imagined himself the reincarnation of the Irish Knight and donned battle armor to match. It's true, of course, that the Hangman, a returning villain whose executioner's hood conceals a hideous pit scarred

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face, is more macabre than any true-to-life ace. But one must consider him not only as an effort to broaden aces but as a symbolic figure. Further his chivalrous relationship with Von Hammer, uncomprehended by his sister Denise, proved fertile ground for both plot and characterization.

"I can look at your brother's face, Countess," Von Hammer told her while a prisoner at the Hangman's chateau. *"Because I know that one day it could be MY OWN! The bloody skies know NO favorites!"*

A story in **SGWB** (No. 149 (Feb 1970), developed a subtle irony. The tale in question, *Reach for The Heavens*, relates Von Hammer's unsteadiness upon learning that a man who bested him in a duel while he was a raw recruit—Heinrich Muller—has been assigned to his Jagdstaffel.

Von Hammer recalled a training mission he shared with Muller—his first flight. Von Hammer watched in amazement as Von Muller broke the chivalric code (primarily an invention of the pulps). A French fighter flew past them, not attacking because he realized the pair were on a training mission. Suddenly Muller whipped a pistol from his pocket, fired, and miraculously punctured the plane's fuel line.

"The French pilot was HELPLESS, Muller! Why?" asked Von Hammer.

Why? Because he was an ENEMY! Because he threatens my COUNTRY! Because I am a Soldier!"

Von Hammer's new encounter with Muller and his subsequent conduct in the air reinforced his impression of the man—cold, merciless, tempered like steel, fast, hard, and always a soldier.

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1964 DC Comics

1964 DC

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And an eminently more realistic one than Von Hammer himself. Not until Muller saved Von Hammer's life at the cost of his own was that opinion revised. Even then it never occurred to him that just as his men misjudged him as had Von Hammer misjudged his comrade.

Had Von Hammer taken the time to look around, he'd have noticed the competition preparing "take-offs" on his war in September 1964, Dell publications released their first issue of **AIR WAR STORIES**. That, and each successive issue, featured a collection of airborne combat tales from various periods of warfare including WWI. In this respect they came closest to **ACES HIGH** in format and content. The art was done by comic veteran, Sam Glanzman, in what could be defined as a semi-documentary style, not too unlike Kubert's. **AIR WAR STORIES** primary plus factor were the beautifully painted covers which were featured frequently. They momentarily tended to bring back memories

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of the pulp era.

Gold Key countered with a painted cover on their **BELIEVE IT OR NOT TRUE WAR STORIES** in 1965. The cover illustrated a scene from the lead story, "Red Knight of Germany," a 10-page tale reconstructing the life of the real Baron Von Richthofen.

Then there was Marvel's **PHANTOM EAGLE**. Noting what appeared to be the success of National's Enemy Ace, Marvel decided to toss their hat in the ring and join the WWI flying ace/dogs. Injudiciously applying the super-hero approach to the air war they produced the masked Phantom Eagle who, without question, deserves a trophy for being the most patently absurd and laughable characters to emerge from the Houses of Ideas. Everyone agreed there was only ONE real WWI flying strip.

The saga of Enemy Ace appropriately began in **OUR ARMY AT WAR** No. 151 (Feb 1965) and continued in 153 and 155. All three were try-out stories, 5 pages in length. Comic readers were enthusiastic, fan mail avalanched into National's offices heralding the strip as "a new dimension in the art of war periodicals" and "an important contribution to the comic art."

Then Enemy Ace landed in the pages of **SHOWCASE** 57 and 58 to star in back-length 24-page tales of combat in the Kubert Stress. Readers were ecstatic. Mail continued to flood in.

Finally **STAR-SPANGLED STORIES** became Enemy Ace occupied territory. Beginning with 136 (May 1968) the "human killing machine" piloted the crimson triplane for 11 sweeping full-length issues.

Then, the inevitable happened! Enemy Ace was cut to a scant 14 pages in **SSWS** 150, edged out by a Viking Prince reprint. Then, the Unknown Soldier, Kubert's new strip, took the lead, opposite Enemy Ace reprints. Next, the Hammer of Hell showed up as a villain guest star appearing with Batman in **DETECTIVE COMICS** 404, a sure sign that she end was in sight. **SSWS** 181 featured the last chapter in the Enemy Ace saga, pitting him against Steve Savage, the Balloon-Buster in a three-part back-up story written by Kanigher and drawn by Frank Thorne. An interesting idea, the story was more of a nostalgic tribute to the quality of both strips than a dramatic addition to their epic storylines.

It had to happen, of course, for two reasons. First, the subject matter had a limited appeal, hardly as much as the

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straight war stories of Sgt. Rock. The fan mail hadn't been a true barometer of the buying public, simply an overly enthusiastic response from a limited group of comic readers.

The second reason was the extremely limiting premise with its built-in flaws. Without severely altering the basic elements in the strip, only variations of the same plot were possible, like almost all comic strips. Enemy Ace failed to develop. The stories were generally secondary to the action anyway and, after 20 tales, readers (and perhaps the writer and artist) had had their fill.

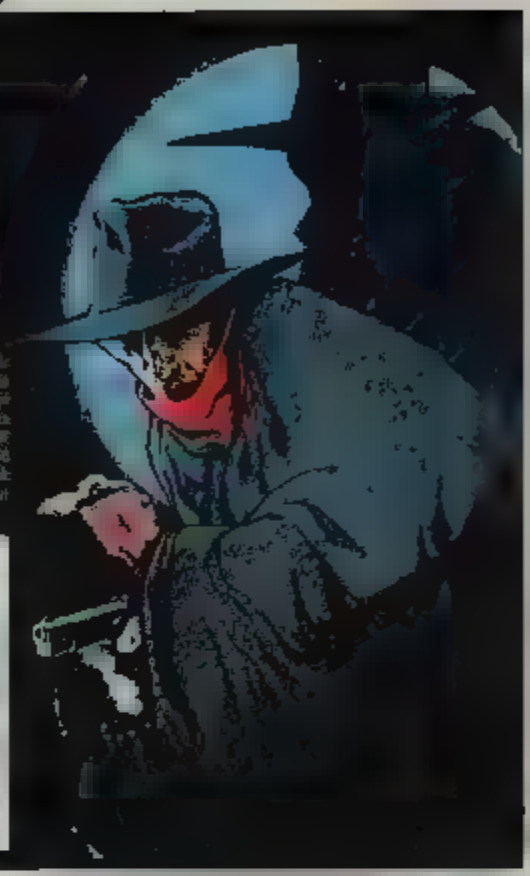
True, Kanigher had employed some extremely interesting devices to hype the strip's popularity. Von Hammer was given ample opportunity of romance. But the beautiful women who embraced him repeatedly found his ups as cold as death itself: an idea obviously borrowed from the 1934 Fredric March film, **Death Takes a Holiday**. Even bits and pieces of the 1966 film **The Blue Max** turned up in various issues, and probably even inspired a few plots. Masked villains and continued stories helped too. But not enough.

Enemy Ace, like G-8, The Lone Eagle and EC's **ACES HIGH**, has flown its charted course. The war was over, the airfield deserted. The killer skies empty.

But, they will be back, sometime.

There Shall be Wings." ●

THE SHADOW KNOWS



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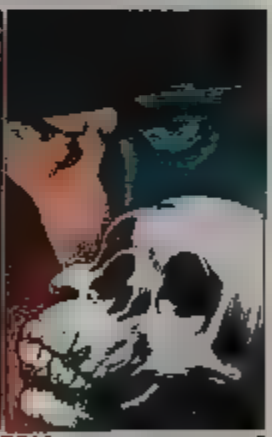

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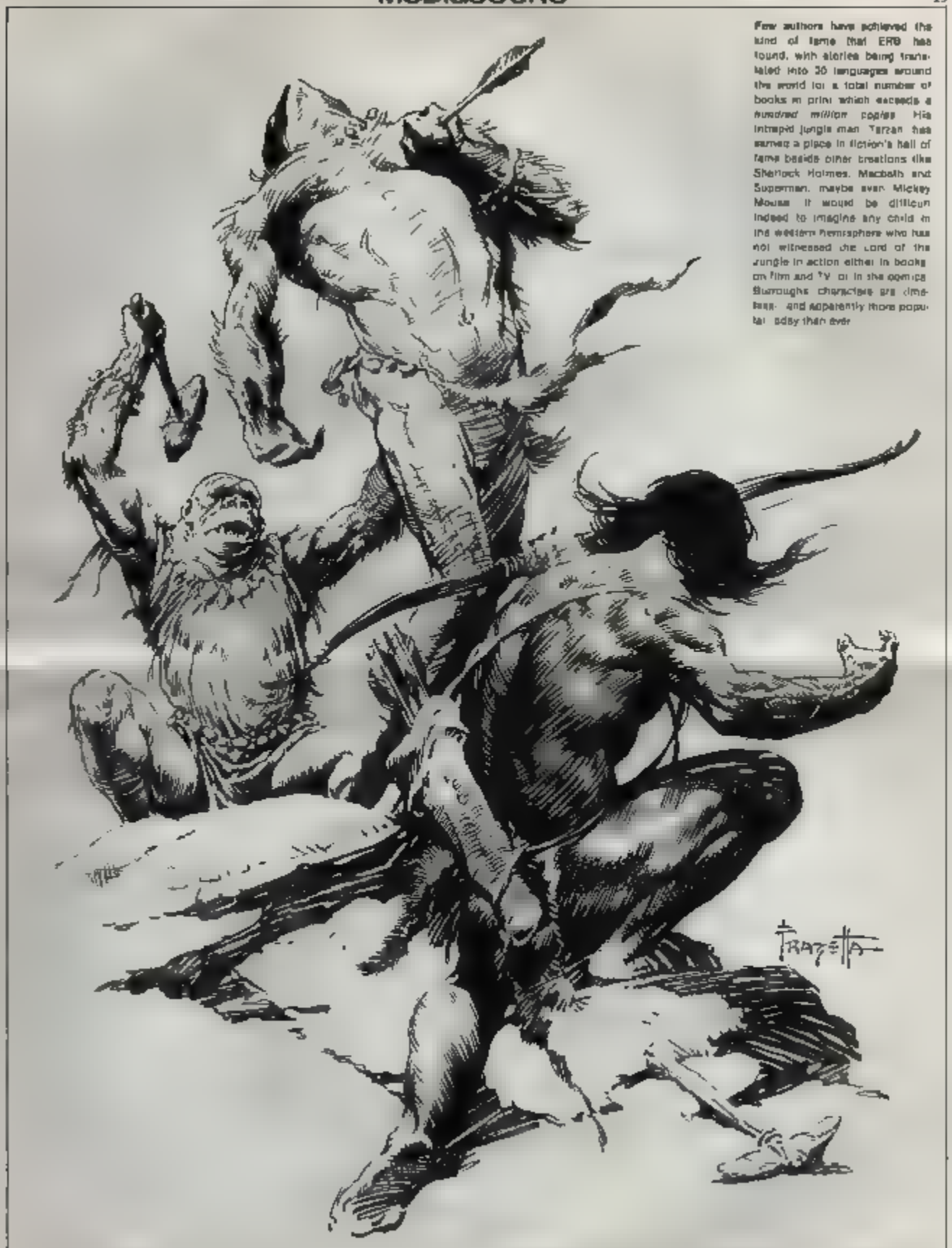

Few authors have achieved the kind of fame that ERB has found, with stories being translated into 30 languages around the world for a total number of books in print which exceeds a *hundred million* copies. His intrepid jungle man Tarzan has earned a place in fiction's hall of fame beside other creations like Sherlock Holmes, Macbeth and Superman, maybe even Mickey Mouse. It would be difficult indeed to imagine any child in the western hemisphere who has not witnessed the Lord of the Jungle in action either in books or film and TV or in the comics. Burroughs characters are timeless and apparently more popular today than ever.

The complete Frazetta ERB Portfolio (which includes these and many more illustrations) is available at $25 plus $1 postage from ERBdom PO BOX 807 St Francisville LA 70775

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In the twilight of Edgar Rice Burroughs centennial celebration, we are pleased to pay tribute to the man who created Tarzan and a legion of equally fearless champions with this special portfolio by fantasy artist Frank Frazetta. In the coming months, **MEDIASCENE** will feature a series on ERB's heroes, and the new books and publications devoted to his works. John Carter, Carson Napier, Thandar, David Innes, Pellucidar, Tanar, Ny and Tarzan will all be on hand to welcome the next hundred years of action and adventure as only Edgar Rice Burroughs could have imagined it ●

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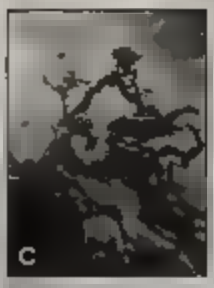
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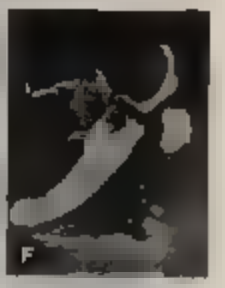
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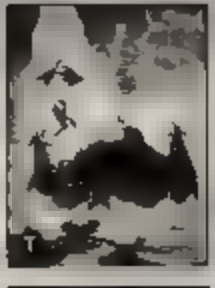
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The Case Against Superman

What will certainly become the most significant award of the year in regards to comic history, happened at the nightly splendid San Diego Convention this past August. The first public appearance of Jerry Siegel since his self-imposed exile began over several decades ago.

The occasion was prompted by the latest idea of the long-term exploit over his rights to Superman. Siegel graciously attended the con banquet as its special Guest of Honor, afterward opening a Pandora's Box of hard times and ill fortune to attending Los Angeles reporters- one which soon became a whirlwind of publicity against his adversaries as it swept the country's media.

Jerry and I sat together at the banquet chatted all too briefly and made plans to meet later. We hadn't been in touch since both of us worked at Marvel Comics in the late 60's. The subsequent evening we spent along with Jerry's wife and daughter, turned out to be as gratifying and rewarding as it was pleasant.

We had saved over the years, a considerable amount of material pertaining to Superman and the various legal actions against DC. Though I had written about Superman and his creators in The History of Comics, I realized as the night progressed that I had only skimmed the surface. Much of what was revealed will have to wait until Siegel himself gets around to telling it - and he is telling it.

Several months after my visit I received the following press release entirely in Jerry Siegel's own words and published here intact as

the siegel press release

It has been announced in show business trade papers that a multi-million dollar production based on the SUPERMAN comic strip is about to be produced. It has been stated that millions of dollars were paid to the owners of SUPERMAN National Periodical Publications Inc. for the right to use the famous comic book super-hero in the new movie. The script is by Mario Puzo, who wrote The Godfather and Earthquake. The film is to have a star-filled cast.

I, Jerry Siegel, the co-originator of SUPERMAN, put a curse on the SUPERMAN movie!

I hope it super-bombs. I hope loyal SUPERMAN fans stay away from it in droves. I hope the whole world, becoming aware of the stench that surrounds SUPERMAN, will avoid the movie like a plague.

Why am I putting this curse on a movie based on my creation of SUPERMAN?

Because cartoonist Joe Shuster and I, who co-originated SUPERMAN together, will not get one cent from the SUPERMAN super-movie deal!

SUPERMAN has been a huge moneymaker for 37 years. During most of those years Joe Shuster and I, who originated the character SUPERMAN, got nothing from our creation, and through many of those years we have known want while SUPERMAN'S publishers became multi-millionaires.

Read the following and you will get some idea of how it feels to create one of the most successful fiction characters of all time, and be cheated out of your share of its profits.

The publishers of SUPERMAN comic books National Periodical Publications, Inc., killed my dad, murdered my mom's physical joy, happiness, stranglehold my career. I consider National's executives economic murderers. Money that members of they and the executives of Warner Communications, of which owns National, had conscience they should right the wrongs they inflicted on Joe Shuster and me.

A CURSE ON THE SUPERMAN MOVIE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Re: THE VICTIMIZATION OF SUPERMAN'S ORIGINATORS JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER BY

Jack Liebowitz, Warner Communications
National Periodical Publications, Inc.
Independent News Company (Distributor of Superman comic books)

Jack Liebowitz, a member of the Board of Directors of Warner Communications, cheated Joe Shuster and me, Jerry Siegel, in the deal.

He ripped our heirs deliberately through Joe and originated SUPERMAN, which enriches Liebowitz and his associates.

Liebowitz is extremely wealthy from SUPERMAN. But Joe Shuster, the artist, and I, the writer, have received nothing from SUPERMAN'S phenomenal success most of the 37 years in which our creation SUPERMAN has been a great money maker for National Periodical Publications, Inc., which is owned by Warner Communications.

Joe is partially blind. My health is not good. We are both 61 years old. Most of our needy during Superman's great success has been spent in want.

How did hard-headed Liebowitz sucker us into this tragic plight? J. S. Liebowitz introduced himself to me in a letter dated December 1937, in which he spoke the eye-glazing line "definite assurance" that he would deal with me "without any trouble such as you have been experiencing in the past. Previously I had dealt with an publisher associate, his Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson.

In 1935, while still in high school, Joe and I created SUPERMAN in our homes in Cleveland, Ohio, at our own initiative and expense. This was not a deal we had any arrangement or dealings with Jack Liebowitz or his company. For almost six years all our hopes and dreams were concentrated on working on and developing SUPERMAN. We were determined in our efforts and refused to let anything or anyone discourage us.

In 1936 Nicholson offered to publish SUPERMAN in a comic book but Joe and I rejected his publishing offer in 1938 Joe and I accepted Liebowitz's offer to publish SUPERMAN because of Liebowitz's written and oral assurances that we could place our trust and confidence in him and deal with him without any trouble.

In the first year of SUPERMAN's publication when SUPERMAN earned a fortune for its publishers and became a smash hit, Joe and I earned less than $75.00 a week apiece from SUPERMAN.

We were paid $10.00 per comic book page. That was $5 per page apiece to Joe and me. When I learned that SUPERMAN was a success, like Oliver Twist asking for more porridge, I requested of Liebowitz that Joe and I be paid more than seven dollars for our SUPERMAN creation.

I received the following response from the cheapskate who had assured me I would deal with him "without any trouble":

On September 28, 1938, J.S. Liebowitz wrote to me: "Now, in reply to your letter. Frankly, when I got through reading it it took my breath away, did not anticipate that when asked you to come to New York to discuss this matter of newspaper syndication that you would want to take advantage of this visit and try to boost your price on 'Superman.'"

I took the cheapskate's breath away by asking the businessman that Joe and I get more than $15 a week apiece because of the success of our creation SUPERMAN.

Liebowitz continues in his letter: "You must bear in mind, Jerry, that when we started Action Comics, we agreed to give you $10.00 a page, which is $4.00 a page more than anyone else is getting for any features in any of our four books. In addition, we're paying you $8.50 and $10.00 a page for the other four features you are drawing for us-again $2.00 and $4.00 a page more than we are paying any other artist. Where you get the idea that we are making $15.00 a page I'd like to know.

As far as the popularity poll is concerned, we have received mainly 300 letters in reply to this series. You will be interested to know that as the majority of these letters have not been opened as yet and I don't know whether Superman heads the list or Zatara or any other feature carried in this book. If you based the popularity of your strip on the basis of 300 replies, you are grossly exaggerating the importance of Superman. Don't forget that there are 64 pages in the magazine and that there isn't any magazine being published today that can sell on the basis of any one feature, whether that feature is Pop Eye, Mickey Mouse or any other top-notch strip, and although for a moment that our magazine depended on your strip, I would certainly make every effort to avoid any such situation."

Liebowitz continued in his letter: "As a matter of fact we have today opened the other mail on the poll and we have found that 28% indicated Zatara to be their favorite feature, 20% like Pep Morgan, 15% like Ted Thompson and only 30% have designated 'Superman' as their favorite, the balance being scattered among the other features in the magazine so come off your high horse."

Joe and I were earning less than $15 a week apiece from SUPERMAN and because we wanted to earn a decent living from our creation SUPERMAN, Jacob R. Liebowitz demanded "come off your high horse."

I will continue quoting from this letter written by the man who is on the Board of Directors of Warner Communications.

Liebowitz continued in his letter of September 28, 1938:

"It is possible that because you rushed up here like a HUMAN BEING, you suddenly got a swell head? It may also be that you are under the mistaken delusion that because you came into town in a large organization, which gave you time and showed you every courtesy which would be accorded to any big personage, you construed all these actions in the wrong light that we were trying to get something from you. The case is distinctly the reverse. We were trying to give you an opportunity, young man, the benefit of our experience and good will in order that you get ahead in your endeavor to become somebody in the comic field.

Don't get the idea that the publishers in New York is a G.F.P. and a H.Shuln-fR and because they are trying to [illegible] that only by [illegible] We [illegible] and the McClure people that WE ARE SEEKING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU."

Wow. Shakespeare who wrote "Me thinks protesteth too much."

Note that Liebowitz referred to me as an inexperienced young man.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines pip as "GREAT SWINDLER."

The same dictionary defines highbinder as "A swindler or scheming politician."

Liebowitz continued. In his letter: "The amount of damage you claimed does not hurt me as much as your attitude in the entire matter. I don't want to be too harsh about it because I realize that because of your inexperience you have made an unfair request. You will learn you have been very fortunate in meeting up with people who are looking out for your interest as well as their own."

Liebowitz was very fortunate in meeting up with people who are looking out for you, Jerry, as well as their own. Liebowitz was again assuring Joe Shuster and me that we could place our TRUST in him.

Joe and I had been extremely confident SUPERMAN would be a huge success because we felt we had created a character which would have tremendous appeal. I wrote in the final panel of SUPERMAN in ACTION COMICS No. 1, June 1938 issue, the banner headline: AND SO BEGINS THE STARTLING ADVENTURES OF THE MOST SENSATIONAL STRIP CHAR-

ACTER OF ALL TIME: SUPERMAN!")

Liebowitz wrote to me that no magazine was published on the basis of one feature "I would certainly make every effort to avoid any such situation and he spoke of my greatly suggesting the importance of *Superman*. Before long SUPERMAN was published in its own magazine.

In his letter of August 18, 1938 Liebowitz wrote to me *So you see, Jerry, we are living up to our promise to you and in time we will be in a position to capitalize on these efforts.*" This referred to Liebowitz's promise that he would look out after the interests of Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel.

In his letter to me of June 8, 1939 Liebowitz wrote of "all of us" benefitting from SUPERMAN.

In his letter to me of January 23 1940 Jack Liebowitz again posted his position that Joe Shuster and I need not worry about "rights," that we could trust him to protect our interests. He wrote *"Get behind you work with zeal and ambition to improve and forget about book rights, movie rights and all other things. We'll take care of things in the proper manner."*

A new SUPERMAN movie is now about to be produced. It has been published that National has been paid millions of dollars for the rights to produce the movie about SUPERMAN the creation of Joe and me. Joe and I have not received one cent from these millions of dollars, though, in connection with movie rights Liebowitz promised Joe and me *WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THINGS IN THE PROPER MANNER.*

We believed Liebowitz's assurances and his representations not to worry about rights but to rely on his personal integrity.

Liebowitz proceeded to receive our good faith which he had aroused with his written and verbal protestations and promises of integrity upon his part he dealt with us unfairly in violation of his promises to protect our interests.

In 1940 Superman appeared on radio. In 1941 Paramount Pictures began to release what eventually amounted to 17 Superman animated cartoons. In his letter of June 27 1941 Liebowitz stated *"Under the terms of our contract you are entitled to a percentage of the net profits accruing from the exploitation of Superman in channels other than magazines. These figures for the last year show that we lost money, and therefore you are entitled to no royalties. However in the face of our usual generous attitude toward you boys, I am enclosing a check for $200 which is in effect a token of thanks."*

The book *1941 Copyright Publishers Analysis* describes, in one of its sections, the actions and posture of unscrupulous publishers who while cheating contributors, hypocritically pretended to have hearts of gold. Here is a quote from page 30:

"They the publisher was the 'GENEROUS' man who would 'take care of the BOYS'.

Liebowitz jumped himself in the aforementioned bald category of unscrupulous exploiters when he wrote, in the letter quoted above:

"However, in line with our usual GENEROUS attitude toward you BOYS."

In his letter dated September 11, 1945, Liebowitz wrote: *"As far as radio and licensing is concerned, Kellogg's Pep is still sponsoring the program. They recently renewed for another thirteen week period and while we are not making much money through this source, we feel it has a beneficial effect in keeping the character before the public.*

the radio superman

Liebowitz said they were "not making much money" from radio but according to the statement of Radio and Licensing that was part of Exhibit 12 in the Westchester case National's income from Radio and Licensing totaled $148,333.11 for the year 1945 ($133,154.68 of that amount was from radio.

Up on Joe before the Westchester trial in the late 1940s, when it was clear there would be a lawsuit, National had not even furnished annual statements to us showing income derived from subsidiary sources to which Joe and I were contractually entitled. Before Young ruled that we were entitled to an accounting.

In July, 1943, I was drafted into the United States Army during World War II. It was at this time that National took over production of the Superman material. When I got out of the Army National refused to return full production of all Superman material to Joe Shuster and me, though our contract specified we were to supply and furnish all Superman material. Taking the exclusive art and script production away from us against the terms of our agreement, not only injured us economically but caused us great mental distress.

During the time I was in the Army overseas and in no position to protect my interests, Detective Comics, Inc. published SUPERBOY, which I had earlier created and submitted for consideration to Detective Comics Inc. the predecessor corporation of National Detective and Liebowitz published SUPERBOY without any notification or compensation to me, thus precipitating the Westchester action. Had Liebowitz kept his word and treated Joe and me ethically instead of reaping our talent and hard work with unfair trade practices, we would have had no difficulty and would not have been maneuvered into initiating the Westchester action in defense of our interests.

Liebowitz and associates of National Detective) state the character SUPERBOY from me. The court ruled they acted illegally in publishing SUPERBOY without right.

I now refer you to the Westchester case Interlocutory Judgement which was "Exhibit E" to National's Answer and part of the record in the recent lawsuit action against National. The [illegible] Judge enjoined the defendants (National) in regard to SUPERBOY from using SUPERBOY. It declared and adjudged that *plaintiff SIEGEL is the originator and the sole owner of the comic strip feature SUPERBOY and that plaintiff as the originator and owner of the comic strip feature SUPERBOY has the sole and exclusive right to create, sell and distribute comic strip material under the title SUPERBOY of the type and nature heretofore published under that title, and of the nature described in plaintiffs exhibits 15 and 36.*"

I quote from the Decision of J. Addison Young Official Referee, in the 1947 Westchester case:

It is quite clear to the trier that in publishing Superboy, the Detective Comics, Inc. acted illegally. I cannot accept defendants view that Superboy was in reality Superman. I think Superboy was a separate and distinct entity. In having published Superboy without right, plaintiffs are entitled to an injunction preventing such publication and under the circumstances before the defendants should account as to the income received from such publication and that plaintiffs should be given an opportunity to prove any damages they have sustained on account thereof. The defendant Detective Comics admits owing plaintiffs over $2,000 for publishing Superboy but this amount is calculated on a basis not binding upon the plaintiffs. I also think that plaintiffs are entitled to an accounting as demanded in their Eighth cause of action."

In other words, it was proven in court that Detective Comics Inc. (Liebowitz and associates) had stolen SUPERBOY from me. The Eighth cause of action concerned Detective (Liebowitz and associates) cheating Joe and me out of SUPERMAN character merchandising outcome.

SUPERBOY was stolen from me.

On September 28, 1938, Jack Liebowitz wrote to me, using the words "GYP" and "HIGHBINDER" and he assured me he and his associates were not the type of corporate criminals who would be *SEEKING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU.*

Again

Webster defines "GYP" as *"CHEAT SWINDLER"*

Webster defines "highbinder" as: "A corrupt or scheming politician."

Liebowitz professing high integrity asserted me in the September 28, 1938 letter. *"You will know you have been very fortunate in coupling up with people who are looking out for your interest as well as their own.*

Joe and trusted Liebowitz and Detective and National to look out for our interest. Instead SUPERBOY was STOLEN and Joe and I were CHEATED out of SUPERMAN subsidiary income royalties.

Also concerned in the 1947 case was Detective Comics Inc. publishing Lois Lane, Girl Reporter and carrying he byline "By Jerry and Joe" without any compensation being paid to us. In addition, Joe and I complained that Detective had unfairly competed with he creation of Joe and SUPERMAN with imitative features such as Johnny Quick, The Flash, Green Lantern, Air-Wave, Hour-Man, Wonder Women, Sandman, Dr. Fate, Hawkman, The Ultra-Man etc.

Back in March 1940, Jack L. Liebowitz wrote in response to a letter of protest from me *"I don't agree with you that the New Man is a copy of Superman. It would be definitely against our better interest to have an imitation of Superman in our books, in spite of the fact that all competing magazines carry an imitation of Superman.*

National Periodical Publications, Inc. is now publishing in competition to SUPERMAN the character Captain Marvel in the comic book *SHAZAM*, and the character appears on TV years ago. National proved in court that Captain Marvel then published by a rival publisher had plagiarized SUPERMAN.

First National put Captain Marvel out of business for plagiarizing Superman, and now National profits from publishing that plagiarism in competition to Superman. Yet back in March 1940 Liebowitz wrote to me *"IT WOULD BE DEFINITELY AGAINST OUR BETTER INTEREST TO HAVE AN IMITATION OF SUPERMAN IN OUR BOOKS. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT ALL COMPETING MAGAZINES CARRY AN IMITATION OF SUPERMAN."* Captain Marvel was and is an imitation of Superman.

For years, Joe Shuster and I have received NOTHING from SUPERMAN WHILE National has reaped more wealth from publishing not only SUPERMAN, but imitations of SUPERMAN.

I repeat Joe is partially blind, my health is not good, he and are 6[illegible] years old.

Three of the most famous literary creations in publishing history are Tarzan (created by Edgar Rice Burroughs), Sherlock Holmes (created by A. Conan Doyle), and Superman (created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.

Edgar Rice Burroughs and his [illegible] are [illegible] hugely from TARZAN. A. Conan Doyle and his estate profited hugely from SHERLOCK HOLMES. Yet Joe and I have not only been cheated and ruined by National, but for most of the 37 years of Superman's publication we have received NOTHING from our creation.

And yet we were told by Liebowitz that he and his associates were ethical and could be trusted to look out after the interests of Joe Shuster and me, Jerry Siegel.

I could write a great deal more, but this should give you an idea of the mentality of Jack L. Liebowitz who lured Joe and me into signing agreements with the assurance Joe and I were very fortunate in meeting up with people who are looking out for your interest as well as their own, then proceeded to cheat us and destroy our happiness and careers.

The people who cheated Joe and me, as well as their heirs, enjoy the wealth SUPERMAN earned and is earning. SUPERMAN's current exploiters, including publisher editors, writers and artists derive big incomes from SUPERMAN.

Joe and I either we think of little else, and it makes us miserable to see how our families suffer too.

So National owns SUPERMAN. But what of the two men Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster who originated SUPERMAN? Is it right that we get NOTHING from the great success of our SUPERMAN creation?

Quoting from a letter written by Joe Shuster *"I feel ashamed, Hey Jerry Siegel, that when we signed with Detective, we would*

truth, justice, american way?

an american nightmare

$20,000 super settlement

The comic book business is in revolution and a mighty leader's life, poetically enough, the same two men who breathed life and substance into his infant forth nearly 40 years ago, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.

They have shouted out NO to a business that consumes the best from its founders and treats one w hou a thought based on unwritten contracts of speculative or unlawful legality and shares with them none of the wealth for which they are responsible.

Current professionals in the comic business, and the public alike, are outraged at the revelation of Superman's creators as two broken, impoverished pawns in a 40-year corporate game. Yet all are assuming that such things ceased to happen in the 40's. In fact though, such medieval tortures of body and soul continue to occur but because most comic creators are young and/or prolific they are still relatively untouched by the effects of corporate manipulation. Most continue to draw checks because they do not seriously challenge the large issues. Indeed they accept minor concessions periodically granted, concessions which, in any other business would be theirs by right and law. Other creators, like Richard Corben, Vaughn Bode and Robert Crumb, refused to concede to the loss of their rights and were forced to find success elsewhere. How many others failed while the less talented crept into comics?

To understand how and why the Siegel-Shuster-Superman controversy has come about, one must look at the comic business as a self-governing archaic, feudal empire. Its monarchs are occasionally benevolent, but overwhelmingly avaricious because of the unpredictable life-span of their product/subjects. "Carpetbagging" at its worst is standard procedure, and disposability of personnel and creations a major characteristic. True they wish money on another's dream, but nowhere have they ever shared in the fortunes made from that dream's success. Rather they assimilate, seldom in writing that dream's creation and success as their sovereign property. The original creators are quickly replaced so as to diminish their claims and they lose all rights to control their characters development or share in the profits.

Unless a creator is independently wealthy he can expect to be poor and abandoned when his talents have been exhausted or he fights for his fair share of the wealth. Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Bill Finger (co-creator of Batman) are all cases of men whose ideas were taped, and were expected to compliantly go off in a corner and die without any shares in their idea's wealth. Other creators, such as Bob Kane (also Batman) sold out million-dollar concepts for relatively few thousands, while Bill Parker (Captain Marvel and Charles Moulton (Wonder Woman) ceased to demand as part of their job. They may have had legal claim to their concepts but even their cases would probably be worth investigating under real copyright laws, not those presented by the publishers.

Formal contracts are generally avoided by all the companies, including National, Marvel and Charlton, as the binding of corporate hands. Unions are

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rapidly picking which will kill the industry. Verbal agreements are preferred, because the creators are often young and ignorant of the law or naive at the outset of such talks, and are deliberately led into life-long statements which are usually exaggerated without basis in fact. Later raises or bonuses are condescendingly granted even if one's own ideas are making millions in merchandising profits. As one professional writer put it, "If the publishers are so sure of their positions legally, why don't they put it all in writing? By remaining verbal they are nebulous enough to spend many years playing 'He said this or that' in court."

The only paper most creators sign is a paycheck. Conveniently for the companies, this is also their version of a contract, since it has a rubber-stamped statement on it that gives the publisher all rights to the creation in any form. This, instead of being a convenient method for payment and bookkeeping, these checks are used to extort potentially valuable rights from individuals who need the money to live. After depositing, sometimes weeks later for this payment the creator is presented with a contract after the fact. Again, verbal agreement is invoked, but this is only for the publisher's convenience, since if you don't sign, the weeks of work are for nothing. The publisher assumes no responsibility for committing the creator's time and energies in his employ, and can dismiss him without even token payment.

In most businesses, even the voracious pulps of the 30's, formal contracts were signed by both publisher and writer before any work was done, or rights reverted to the author after publication. Only in comics is the creator left legally in the air until the time, effort and talent of a job are completed and all rights relinquished. Even so, the undue pressure of these check-contracts is so tainted with illegality and unusual force, that their binding powers are speculative. Unfortunately, no one "in the business" has ever dared to seriously challenge it, lest they follow Siegel and Shuster. Similarly no one has ever moved outside the business and fought because it is simply not worth going to court for the rest of their lives. Only if a creation is an overwhelming success will the word "contract" come up, otherwise everything is covered in a magicly inclusive "verbal agreement."

True John Buscema, Ross Andru, Jack Kirby, Rich Buckler and Stan Lee currently have bonanzas, but they are not the kind even paperback writers get. There are no creative rights or royalties or shares in any consequent profits, only blanket releases of claims to all such rights in return for a flat fee. This fee, incidently is embarassingly low by commercial art standards for most, and was, until the late 60's essentially the same as in the 40's.

Copyright law states that a publisher buys *first American publication rights* only, unless otherwise negotiated. Anything beyond that must be spelled out specifically and the company does not own the art or character/concepts. Don Pendleton *proved* this in his 1973-74 Executioner paperback battle, as have Edgar Rice Burroughs' and Sax Rohmer's heirs. But in comics such legalities as specific contracts don't exist. By some curious process, the comics publishers have assumed all powers, including film, TV, foreign reprint and merchandising rights. *Without* formal contracts, or basis in fact or law, they claim a 40 year-old "precedent," based on a terrible con-rail for the superhero creation of two 17 year-old kids. This "precedent" continues to bind creators even today and strangely, the courts side with the now-rich publishers in contravention of apparent copyright law. It seems that tradition and "precedent" have become the law, and justice is beat

COMIXSCENE

served if creators would stay the hell out of business and go away and die when their usefulness is ended. Superman and Batman may have been somebody else's ideas but they are now National's millions, and only fatally a public scandal.

To this day only comics creators do not have any creative rights in their legal contracts or recourse, and are systematically decided against in court.

Today's comic-scene remains a throwback to the 40's publishing practice of "We bought it, its ours, and you can't have any part of it even if you did create it."

The publishers of today claim that poor sales and a recession are hurting the industry and everyone should take pity on their plight. They completely ignore the fact that the comics are not now, nor ever have been at the crux of the matter. For decades, the companies have bought and sold creations in merchandising deals around the world, involving perhaps millions of dollars, without once sharing with those most responsible the creators. The new Superman movie alone is supposed to have a $20 million budget and is but the tip of the iceberg of related products.

The companies also ignore the fact that the current comics situation is almost entirely their own responsibility brought about by the attempted mechanization of a small craft industry. Over-expanded into a nearly unsupportable factory operation, the comics also suffer from uninformed upper-echelon interference and mismanagement.

Unfortunately the situation is not likely to change soon, and will certainly continue if Siegel and Shuster settle their case. Their tyrannical 40's 'precedent' will team-up with 70's opportunism to keep the creator controlled. To gain any of the rights other publishing outfits have, someone will have to take on a big company and all its lawyers in open court.

But it will never happen. Siegel and Shuster have already spent 40 years begging for justice in court, and an earlier comics battle between Superman and Captain Marvel lasted 12 years without being resolved. By now anyone with eyes can see the meaning behind Mario Puzo's line in **The Godfather** that "A lawyer with a briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns."

Until recently comic artists could not even recover their original artwork because the publishers claimed that they bought it physically when they paid the creator in reality the comic art at only sells the services unless both parties engage in a legally separate and different property transaction.

In 1973, Marvel ruled to return the art to the artist and together with the Academy of Comic Book Arts, praised themselves as philanthropists. National promised to return their art soon after but when one artist made a point of the matter before accepting a job, he inevitably found the pages warehoused for five years after printing. So far neither we nor anyone we know, have ever heard of anyone recovering anything from the DC warehouse. The fact remains however that for 40 years the

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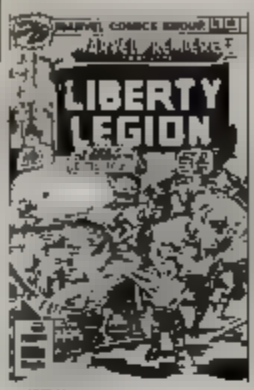
publishers have illegally concealed artwork, and there are some ailing Golden-Age artists who could use the material for its resale value. Rather than see somebody else make money on what they selfishly regard as theirs, however many publishers often destroyed the art or gave it away, a practice continued until a very few years ago.

In 1973, National even threatened to prosecute anyone involved in the theft of 1900 pages of comic art from their offices. Their authority to take action was largely fictional, confined to their responsibility as custodians of the art, which incidentally was never returned.

In general most artists, writers and editors are sympathetic to Siegel and Shuster's fight and Neal Adams is coordinating efforts on their behalf through active support of that multi-media campaign. ACBA has also entered the battle in a supportive role, along with the more politically powerful National Cartoonists Society.

Marvel's Stan Lee Norman has taken the stand that Siegel and Shuster were systematically robbed over a 30-year period, simply because they were the first to achieve success in a new field. This robbery has established the concept of superheroes alongside an unfair precedent both of



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which still rule the industry. Newspaper creators have rights, and Superman was originally intended to be a newspaper strip, but because Siegel and Shuster were unfortunate enough to enter comics and were gnorish, they were robbed. Unfortunately both sides will probably settle, because Warner Communications won't tolerate the loss of this precedent. From what I've heard Warner's comics have been losing money for years, but they won't let such a trivial detail jeopardize their larger merchandising set-up."

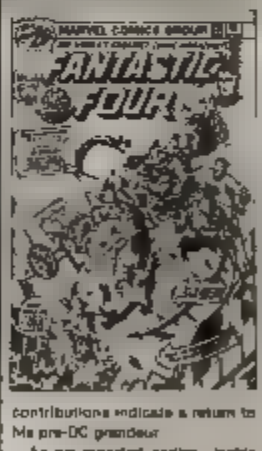
Roy Thomas states that "I think the companies must retain some rights in order to protect their investment, but they must also recognize the creator's rights to a more cooperative system. Formal contracts would be a way to equalize matters, with the creator more of a business partner with a percentage in this Superman case though. National is in a difficult position Liebowitz, who may have been callous in his dealings, no longer has anything to do with the comics. As a result DC per se is not responsible, and is probably unimportant since most money coming in is from merchandising."

Len Wein views the matter with a more insidious outlook. "I have inside information at National that leads me to reserve final judgment - it may be misinformed, but I believe all the developments in this Siegel and Shuster business are not yet apparent. I don't know why not."

One final word on the Siegel and Shuster matter must be that while the general public can claim ignorance of the abuses, these men have suffered, neither publishers nor working professionals have that excuse. Perhaps the details were unknown, but everyone watched as Warner/National systematically made millions while Siegel and Shuster's names were removed from stories, and ignored as Superman's creators. Some knew more than others, but everyone realized that Superman made comics, and his creators were pushed aside and deliberately forgotten.

kirby's capers revealed

Despite its many problems, the comic industry remains the soil in garden from which great ideas occasionally spring. As always Jack Kirby is the first with the most in any comics brain trust, and his recent Marvel



contributions indicate a return to Mega-pre-DC grandeur.

As we reported earlier Jack's "secret project" for the last few months has a gods-on-earth theme, very much like an extension of his New Gods trilogy for National. We have been the first few issues, and can report on it with accuracy and detail.

The title of the new series is **The Reborn of the Gods**, and it's a monthly, 35-cent book. The hero is the character seen on the recent Bullpen Bulletins page, and his name is Eurus. He is one of a race of Eternals, the good guys in Jack's storyline. Opposing the Eternals are the Deviants, led by the evil Brother Tode. The

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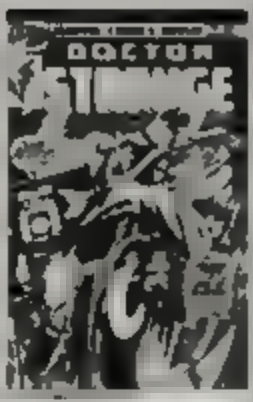
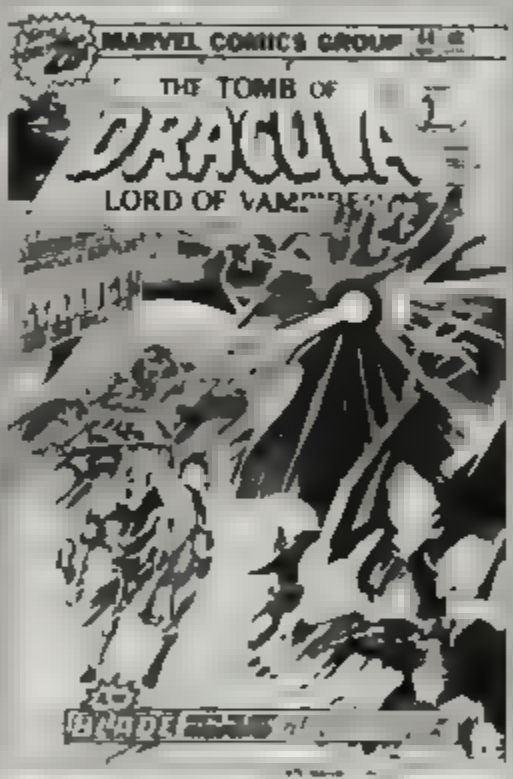




conan quartet wind-up

COMIXSCENE

scheduled to adapt "The Shadows of Zombouish." If he ever finishes the job. Then, as either the next issue, or a quick replacement, Buscema will present another 40-page epic featuring a well-stacked slave princess.

In the **Fantastic Four**, George Perez will take over as permanent artist and Ben Grimm loses his Thing, as mentioned in the last issue of **MEDIASCENE**. This is the beginning of a convoluted tale in which Powerman replaces the Thing, while Ben is busy creating an artificial substitute.

Howard the Duck may be one of Marvel's newest superstars, after a first issue that had to go back to press due to high advance orders from comic dealers. Frank Brunner is no longer drawing the series however, after two (!!!) issues by John Buscema and Gene Colan. Howard will come under the Graham Ingels/Carl Gafford influence of Berni Wrightson, who specifically asked to do the book.

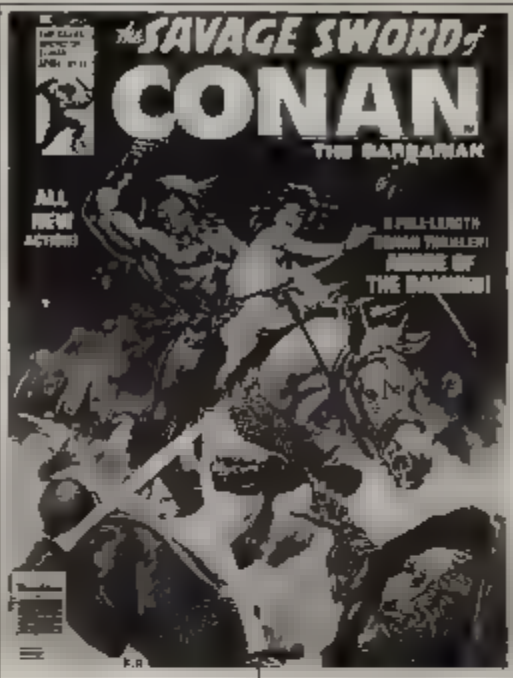
Mary Wolfman has plans to introduce another epic storyline into the **Dracula** comic, that will spend some time dealing with Dracula's heretofore neglected love-life. Issue 46 will introduce a lady into the vampire's destiny, their first meeting taking place at a crucifixion. Then, wedding bells will ring, and by next Christmas Dracula will be a daddy. There's more, but we don't want to spoil it for you.

Len Wein's plans for **The Hulk** are leading up to the 300th issue, which will be a guest-villain free-for-all of suitably colossal proportions. Then the green gargantua will battle a "Conan-type" barbarian, followed by a cross-over into **The Defenders**. Jimiia will also come for a visit to earth, with magic results, after which the Hulk will visit New York for 6 or 8 months.

In **Spider-Man**, the Night Crawler and the Kingpin will soon creep out of New York's back alleys, as will Stegron the Dinosaur Man, the Lizard and the Terrible Tinkerer. There will even be a one-issue crossover with Deadpool, in which the Man Without Fear joins Spidey to combat the Owl and the Vulture.

Very little is being reported from National these days, except that Gerry Conway and Pablo Marcos are collaborating on a back-up feature for **Kamandi**, to be called *"Tales of the Great Disaster."*

In preparation for the upcoming Bicentennial, National is preparing two pseudo-events, one of which has already suffered a setback. First up is a special commemorative build up to the release of the 300th issue of **Superman**. Neal Adams was to pencil this landmark issue, but has since found his schedule too full to meet the deadlines, and been forced to bow out.



The second reported DC event will be the establishment of the **Super Star Society**, the official National fan club. Timed towards participation the DC Super Star Society is National's answer to the *Merry Marvel Marching Society*. Siegel and Shuster not withstanding.

We have, since last issue, learned that Bob Kanigher's new superhero creation is named The Ragmen, not The Junkmen as reported. Ragman's origin and concept remain the same but in this somehow got garbled, perhaps because he is the son of a junkman. Super Sanford and Son?

Shake-ups are taking place at Gold Key with cancellations being visited upon Dr Spektor's **Spine-Tingling Tales**, **Brothers of the Spear**, **Dark Shadows**, **Mighty Samson** and **The Jungle Tales**. Emphasis is being shifted to be licensed animated cartoon titles and Don Glut is grieving over his apparent loss of a **Slumber Land of the Elves** layout. Gold Key editors are still open for persuasion however and are asking for letters which may be used on a readers page.

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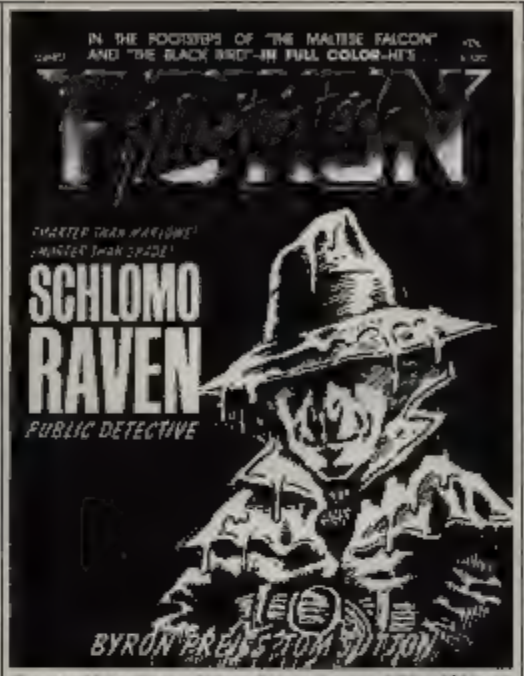
NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

Despite this setback, Don Glut is keeping busy with his usual line of creations, led by **Doctor Spektor** #2's *"Night of the Owl."* In this tale, Spektor battles a legendary demon named Andras, only to be aided at the last moment by Gold Key's nearly forgotten superhero, The Owl.

Tragg 8 contains *"Attack of the Man-Apes,"* who are properly incensed as their god is accidently destroyed when the hero of the series puts out their eternal fire.

Dagar 17 goes Macbeth, as the barbarian is reunited with three witches he met in an earlier tale, and soon finds himself up to his loin-cloth in toil and trouble.

We'd like to take this opportunity to state that Jerry Bails is not working for DC in any capacity. We were misinformed on this, and remained uncorrected for six weeks, until Jerry himself jokingly "thanked" us for the job. So while we're on the subject, we'd like to give an unabashed plug to Jerry Bails and Hames Ware's three volumes of **The Who's Who of American Comic Books.** These are highly researched, alphabetical, biographic indexes for almost every artist, writer, editor, inker and letterer who has ever been in the



40-year old business. Volume one covers creators from A to F, and costs $5. Volume two runs from G to M, and besides being larger, has an additional 24-pages of art reproductions for $7.00. The third, but not last, in the series contains letters N through S, at $8.00. No comics library can be complete without the **Who's Who**, which can be ordered from Jerry Bails, 467 Lakewood, Detroit MI, 48215.

In January, Byron Preiss and Pyramid Books will release the first volume of a series of full-color, adult, graphic novels. As oversized paperbacks, the series will receive newsstand and bookstore distribution, and will alternately feature sci-fi, detective and humorous stories under the collective cognomen **Fiction Illustrated**, with a price tag of $1.

The first release is *Schlomo Raven*, a funny, nostalgic tribute to the Sam Spade private-eye mythos. Written by Preiss and illustrated by Tom Sutton, Schlomo Raven is a freewheeling farce, featuring an all-Black musical version of **Citizen Kane**, and the kidnapping of the four Fara Brothers—Heepo, Zeepo, Choocho and Grippo—by Bumphrey Hogart. Schlomo himself is three feet tall, and spends a lot of time talking up to people.

Book 2 will appear, on its quarterly schedule, in April, and is an unofficially inspired Star Trek take-off called *Starfawn*, by Byron and Steve Fabian. The third book will be a take-off on a classic detective by Preiss and Ralph Reese. Watch for all these and more in the months ahead.

Late-breaking word on the Salkind Brothers' **Superman** movie is that Mario Puzo is having difficulty with the character, due to a general lack of knowledge about the Man of Steel. Reportedly, the first scene in Puzo's screenplay has Superman writing in his diary (with heat vision), at the Fortress of Solitude. He is working in his personal den, which is furnished with animal-hide rugs and mounted big-game trophies. Allan Quatermain, yes. Superman, NO!

One source who should know, reported that Puzo stated he got the job because he had a way for Superman to "make" Lois Lane. Whether true or not, the use of Puzo's name on the film's credits is undoubtedly the primary factor involved. Guy Hamilton, director of the James Bond flicks, is slated to guide the Man of Steel through this cinematic incarnation, with Burt Reynolds a heavyweight contender for the lead.

How far astray the film will go from the original concepts is anybody's guess. It may be enough to make us all yell, "GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST!!"

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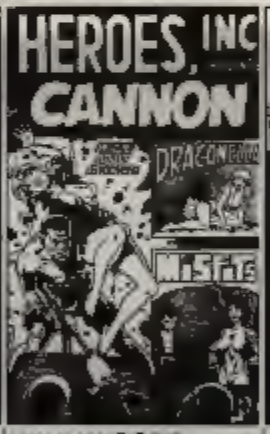

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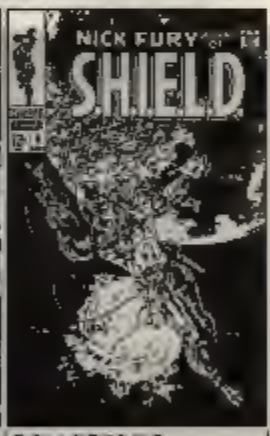

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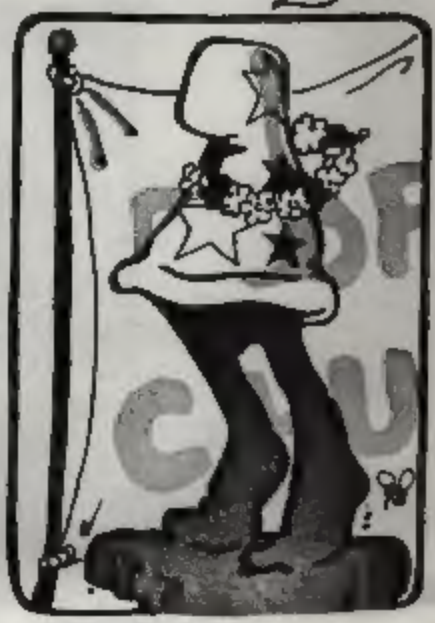

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BARRY SMITH SUSPENDS GORBLIMEY PRESS OPERATIONS

In a letter dated the 20th of November, Barry Smith revealed that he plans to temporarily suspend operations of his publishing company, GorbLimey Press (or GbP).

He returned to his former home in England around the beginning of October for the purpose of taking a much needed vacation, and to undergo a minor surgical operation. When we last spoke, Barry said he planned to return to the States after about two or three weeks to continue work on his Robin Hood project and put the finishing touches on the near-completed GbP Catalog.

The operation proved to be more serious than expected, however, necessitating an extended stay in England. Barry states in his letter, *"During this time, of course, GbP is stagnating. It's my decision to close down the company for the while. There is, in fact, no choice as all the stock is warehoused in the States. Would you please run a notice in your magazine stating that due to illness, GbP has closed for a while and that all orders are being put on ice [so to speak] to be filled upon my recovery and return to the U.S. I really hope this might not be too long, but it will be a while—that's for sure.] Further to this, I plan to send free prints of some drawing or other (a good one of course) to those who've waited as a token of my appreciation of their patience. I hope you will agree to this, as my commitments have been greatly upon my mind in the last few weeks."*

In compliance with Barry's request, all orders which have been sent both to **SUPERGRAPHICS and to Ben Siker of BLUE STAR are being held** until the various prints and posters are released contingent upon Smith's return to the country. The small supply of stock which was available just before Barry's trip has been used to fill the earliest orders.

All orders awaiting shipment will be sent immediately upon receipt of the Smith material. Those not wishing to wait will be sent a prompt and courteous refund by both SUPERGRAPHICS and BLUE STAR upon notification.

Speaking for Ben Siker and myself, we ask for your indulgence in this untimely and unfortunate circumstance, and to join with us in wishing Barry Smith a rapid and complete recovery.

STERANKO

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New Yorkers are a strange breed of animal who alternately love and hate the city they've nicknamed "the big apple!" Former *Marvel Comics* staffer Flo Steinberg is one such New Yorker, and, as an underground comic publisher, has decided to pay special tribute to her chosen city along with a dozen other notables. Together they explore a myraid of Manhattan mysteries, and live to tell it all in **BIG APPLE COMIX**, unafraid, uncensored and unshaven! There are eight million stories in the naked city, and (to quote **BIG APPLE**) all of them are dull. YET THEY MUST BE TOLD—here are the Dreamers and the Dykes, the Con-men and the Cruisers, the Muggers and the Muggees—in tales guaranteed to bring tears to your eyes (or is it the smog?). At last, a book that manages to offend almost everyone. But why take our word—send us a buck and see for yourself!!